



INTERVIEW

Ukraine
will fight till
the end

2

10



LOCAL

Restaurant sector still
grappling to recover from
COVID-era

9

LOCAL

Who do we celebrate when
we celebrate International
Women's Day?



www.timeskuwait.com

250 Fils

Kuwait Airways all set to fly higher

BY REAVEN D'SOUZA
MANAGING EDITOR

Kuwait Airways is on a growth trajectory with ambitious plans of increasing its passenger traffic from just one million in 2021 to 4.2 million passengers this year, revealed Maen Razouki Chief Executive Officer of the airline.

Speaking to The Times Kuwait, the CEO said that selectively investing in the right routes and the right planes for the right customers were definitely part of their growth journey.

Currently the airline was flying to 40 destinations and has announced 17 new destinations while targeting to reach 100 destinations within the next two years.

Speaking at the Arab Aviation Summit, Kuwait Airways CEO along with several industry experts were optimistic that the sector was normalising. Titled Roadmap to Recovery the summit which was held in Ras Al Khaimah, discussed the role of aviation and tourism and the industry recovery post the pandemic



Kuwait Airways CEO Maen Razouki with The Times Kuwait Managing Editor

Hailed as the 'voice of the industry', the Summit marked the partnership of the three key players in the travel and tourism industry: Public sector, Private sector, and Media.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

International Women's Day 2022

*Gender equality today
for a sustainable tomorrow*

International Women's Day (IWD), which is celebrated around the world on 8 March, is an occasion to acknowledge the crucial role that women play in the home, in the workplace and in society. It is also an opportunity to highlight the many disadvantages, prejudices and outright violence they face on a daily basis in their quest for better empowerment and equality in society.

Data from various sources show that 70 percent of the 1.3 billion global population living



in conditions of poverty are women. Women predominate in the world's food production (50-80 per cent), but they own less than 10 per cent of the land.

Moreover, 80 percent of those displaced by climate related disasters and changes around the world are women and girls.

The theme for this year's United Nations Observance of International Women's Day is aptly enough on, 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Be closer to your loved ones.



**\$end money abroad
within minutes.**



KIECO
Built on your trust



Ukraine will fight till the end

Ambassador H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa

Over the past week, Ukraine has become the center of global attention. We are in the Gulf, although we are geographically far from Ukraine, the intertwining of interests and the complexity of the ongoing events makes it imperative that we discuss these events, which undoubtedly will affect us in the future.

The direct party in these events is Russia, which has direct and strong relations with the Gulf states. One of the most important of these interests is the multiple partnerships in the fields of energy and OPEC + led by Riyadh and Moscow.

On the other hand, the United States and the Western countries are the largest strategic, military and commercial ally of the Gulf states, and Ukraine itself has distinguished relations with a number of Middle Eastern countries, with which their cooperation constitutes a guarantee of vital and important food security.

In this context, Reconnaissance Research conducted an interview with the Ambassador of Ukraine to the State of Kuwait, His Excellency Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa:

In light of what Ukraine is currently suffering from, what is your message to readers of this interview?

As the President of Ukraine V. Zelensky said, 'Life will definitely win over death; the world will defeat darkness'. But today, Russia is dangerous, it promotes aggression, exclusion, intolerance, and crimes against humanity. My message is, you can help Ukraine by stopping any type of cooperation with the Russian Federation. We all have the power to stop the bloodshed and war. Let's combine our efforts and end Russia's war on freedom, democratic values and the whole civilized world. For the sake of Ukraine, we are asking everyone for solidarity and support. We call to boycott the Russian state, until it completely withdraws from Ukraine and is held responsible for its crimes. All around the world, countries are supporting Ukraine by:

- **Suspending Russian participation in international events.**
- **Boycotting events organized by Russian institutions as well as international foundations that are linked or funded by Putin's regime.**
- **Removing representatives affiliated with the Russian state or Russian capital from supervisory and advisory boards of many organizations.**
- **Refusing any donations, funding or sponsorship from Russian organizations, their proxies and affiliates.**
- **Canceling any cooperation with Russians who openly support Putin's regime.**

In size and sheer numbers, the Russian military has superiority. So what is Ukraine betting on?

We've heard so many tales about the 'invincible Russian army', but now the myth is dispelled. Around 9000 Russian personnel were killed and hundreds of enemy aircrafts, helicopters, vessels, vehicles were shot down. Russian prisoners of war are begging their relatives in Russia to protest against this military aggression. Some of them already refuse to follow orders to shoot

civilians or civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

Now we are witnessing unprecedented unity of the international community, standing with Ukraine. The pressure and sanctions of the entire civilized world has pushed Russia back to the Stone Age.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, our brave warriors and volunteers, are paramount heroes, and they know that Ukraine's victory over evil is the only option to end this war.

What is your assessment on Kuwait's reaction towards Ukraine?

On 24 February 2022, I met Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait to deliver a



H.E. Foreign Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs
Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah

message on the tense situation in Ukraine, caused by the foreign military invasion. In his turn, Kuwait's Foreign Minister expressed his rejection of the use of force, threats of force in relations between states, stressed the need to respect the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, affirmed his full support for all international efforts aimed at de-escalation and settling international disputes by peaceful means.

On the first day of Russian full-scale invasion, Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a statement, stressing the importance of adhering to the well-established principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations that govern relations between states and are based on respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, the principles of good neighborliness and resolving disputes by peaceful means.

Kuwait is the only Gulf country which has agreed to be a co-sponsor of the Joint statement following a vote on a UN Security Council resolution on Russia's aggression toward Ukraine. Kuwait is among 141 UN Member States who have voted in favor of a Resolution A/RES/ES-11/1, deploring Russia's invasion of Ukraine, demanding a full withdrawal of Russian forces and a reversal of its decision to recognize the self-declared People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk.

We thank our Kuwaiti partners for their support and principled position that Kuwait has taken. We cannot stress enough in acknowledging the important role played by the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, who under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, worked tirelessly to highlight the dangers of inaction during this crisis.

Russia has the right of veto, which makes the United Nations in a very weak position, so on whom does Ukraine depend?

The status of a permanent UNSC member grants Russia the right to veto the Council's decisions — the latest one of which has been to veto a resolution condemning



H.E. Ambassador of Ukraine, Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa

Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But Ukraine believes that Russia's membership in the UN and UNSC is illegitimate.

Speaking at a UN Security Council meeting on 24 February, almost immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Serhiy Kyslytsia, Ukraine's permanent representative to the UN, raised an important question of how legally Russia has become a member of the UN Security Council instead of the USSR. This issue was largely ignored in the press amid the war that Russia has unleashed.

Anyhow, Russia always abuses its power to veto resolutions. But Russia cannot veto the voice of the international community, the Ukrainian people, their own people protesting this war in the streets. Russia cannot veto the UN Charter. Russia cannot, and will not, veto accountability.

All Ukrainians praise the approval by the UN GA with an unprecedented majority of votes of the resolution with a strong demand to Russia to immediately stop the treacherous attack on Ukraine. We are grateful to every state that voted in favor, choosing the right side of history.

On 3 March 2022, 38 countries from across the world made the largest ever referral to the International Criminal Court for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It is crystal clear that Putin cannot commit these horrific acts with impunity.

Who is Ukraine betting on? And how much of that relies on the armed resistance if the occupation prolongs?

I'm sure, Ukrainian Armed Forces will never surrender, because they are defending the Motherland. Ukraine is a peaceful country, but everybody coming to our land to kill Ukrainians will be punished. We are already gathering evidence of Russian military crimes in Ukraine, one day we'll meet in the international court to force Russia to justice.

They must learn such words as 'contributions' and 'reparations' since they will have to pay to Ukraine for what they've done. The burden of shame and

remorse will be very heavy – all Russians will hold responsibility for the decision of one person.

Our weapons now are rifles, fighter jets and machine guns. The weapons of the West are sanctions. And they are using it very smartly because if Ukraine falls today, tomorrow Putin's appetite will spread much further. Western nations are imposing increasingly severe sanctions on Russia.

Ukraine is now coordinating new sanctions on Russia for its aggression against Ukraine, as well as steps to close any loopholes and leave Russia no chance to bypass current and future sanctions. Tough economic consequences are already deeply felt by every Russian. They are cut off from world logistics chains, international business and finance systems, traveling, sport, culture etc. Yesterday Russians silently obeyed the orders of their political leadership, today it's their last chance to stop this madness and refuse to continue the war, tomorrow justice will prevail.

What will your position be as a citizen of Ukraine if a new pro-Russian government is installed in Ukraine?

We will never let this happen. Putin cannot kill the entire nation. We will fight as long as we live. Glory to Ukraine.



Interview was conducted by
Reconnaissance Research

Nearly 100 cases of eye injuries reported during national celebrations



Rental rates to stabilize as demand matches supply

Rental prices in Kuwait have generally remained stable in recent months after witnessing large falls during the height of the pandemic in 2020. During the two years of the COVID-19 crisis many landlords, either willingly or due to falling demand, dropped rents on their apartments by as much as 30 percent.

Now with the health crisis abating, the economy beginning to pick up, and more expatriates returning to the country, there is an increase in demand for investment, commercial and residential apartments in several areas. However, prices have not risen sharply as expected, largely due to the availability of a supply matching the demand.

However, real estate experts maintain that since rents are based on the principle of supply and demand, determining the rent of apartments in Kuwait is left to the free market, and the agreement between the two parties to the contract. There are no laws that obligate real estate owners with specific rental values, or a certain ceiling, as Kuwait is a market-oriented country.

They explained that Kuwait's rents have rarely fallen, except during the 2008 financial crisis and during the 2020 coronavirus crises, due in large measure to the small size of the country, the large number of expatriates, and the supply of rental properties catering to the demand. The experts say until supply overweighs demand, or demand outstrips supply the current rental stability is likely to be maintained.

They also pointed out that rental property prices, as well as commercial and investment property prices, can come down only if the government decides to open up more land for real-estate construction, the private sector involvement in real estate development increases appreciably, and if labor cities are built to house the large number of expatriate population in the country.

On rents remaining unchanged in recent years, the experts said that Article 11 of the Tenancy Law in Kuwait confirms that the agreed-upon rent in the lease contract is binding on the contracting parties and may not be amended except by their agreement or for reasons determined by law, including the demand for the same wage, or the passage of at least five years.

Moreover, the lessee is not legally obligated to accept the modification made by the lessor at his own will, even if five years have passed, since the determination of the rental value is based on supply and demand, or by resorting to the competent legal court and obtaining a ruling to that effect.

PACI warns of fake messages sent in its name

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has informed the public that fake messages are being circulated online under its name, and warned citizens and residents to be wary of such messages that request personal and financial data.

The authority urged people not to respond to these messages or click on any link attached to the message, and pointed out that PACI does not send out any links. The authority said the fake messages say that the government's 'My Identity' application has expired and requests for personal information in order to renew the app.

In an unrelated but nevertheless interesting note, the latest data from the Central Bank points out that in 2021 around 3,456 cheques issued by citizens and residents in Kuwait were returned due to insufficient amounts in their bank balance.

The cheques with a total value of KD107 million were issued by 2,422 citizens and residents during the period from 1 January until 31 December, 2021.



Despite awareness campaigns and restrictions on their use by the Interior Ministry, there were more than 93 reported cases of eye injuries sustained due to the flinging of water-filled balloons or the use of water-cannons by revelers on passers-by during celebrations marking Kuwait's national holidays.

Head of the Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al-Bahr Eye Center and head of the Council of Eye Departments in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abdullah Al-Baghli, said that while celebration of national holidays was a legitimate right for everyone, the celebrations should not pose a threat to the health of any person.

He pointed out that some people use water pistols, water sprayers and balloons filled with water and throw them at others, specifically in the face and eye area, which sometimes cause very serious injuries and have serious consequences.

Al-Baghli noted that during the celebrations of the National and Liberation Day on Saturday and Sunday, the Accidents Department of the Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al-Bahr Eye Center received about 92 cases, including 75 injuries that consisted of scratches or damage to the cornea, six hits in the eye area, a case of a wound to the eyelid, and a case of a blow around the eye that led to fracture towards the eye.

He added, there are two cases of internal bleeding



in the eye, and one case of bleeding and an external wound in the eye, as well as six cases of injuries, where the victims said they were injured by revelers throwing water-filled balloons at them.

On a related health note, latest figures from data available with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry show that Kuwait imported tobacco and related products worth KD43.9 million during the period from 1 January to 30 September 2021.

During the same period, the export of tobacco and related products from Kuwait amounted to only KD1.1 million, implying that around KD42.8 million worth of tobacco and related products, including sheesha, were sold or stocked in Kuwait during this period

Freshly Launched

BUTTER CHICKEN POUTINE

Creamy Butter Chicken
Crispy Thick Fries

Exclusive at Shuwaikh Branch

TREAT YOURSELF

WWW.MUGHALMAHAL.COM | @MUGHALMAHALKUWAIT

Thought for the week

“ If you're helping someone and expecting something in return, you're doing business not kindness.

Unknown

Late Night Cravings?

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



If you want to lose weight faster and naturally, then you need to control your nighttime food cravings. All food cravings are diet-killers (if you make the wrong choices), but the ones that hit you late at night seem to be the worst diet enemy. It causes a fast weight gain simply because your metabolism will go down at night, so anything you eat is more likely to be stored as fat.

One reason why some people tend to skip their breakfast in the morning is because they cannot control their habit of munching on food late at night. Also, do



not consider cutting down your needed calories per day to help you lose weight; it will only set you up for more food cravings later in the evening.

But I understand that many of you, including me, like to munch on something, especially late at night after a long busy day, usually called “the mindless snacking”, which often happens while watching TV, or while browsing the net.

If you must munch late at night, then, instead of munching on junk snacks, choose healthy options from the list below:

- Carrot and cucumber sticks, with some low-fat yogurt dip
- Broccoli, celery, mushrooms, cauliflower raw crunchy pieces, with cocktail dip (mustard, ketchup and a teaspoon of low-fat mayo)
- 1 small bowl of home-made popcorn, full of fiber, super healthy and light
- 1 fresh fruit from your choice (one only). An Excellent high fiber choice
- 1 handful of mixed nuts, full of protein and fiber.
- 1 mug of whole wheat cereal or oats with a cup of low-fat milk or yogurt
- 1 handful of pumpkin or sunflower seeds, non-salted (salt retains water), full of fiber.
- 2 small squares of dark chocolate, rich in antioxidants
- One simple tip that I usually do and helps a lot: Brush your teeth after you eat with menthol toothpaste, it quickly relieves the hunger feeling. Try it.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,
don't forget to log in to:
www.eatlikemira.com.



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

RECIPE

Trio-Treat



Try this amazing rice-medley recipe made up of a trio of different colored rices that lend a patriotic tint and a rich, flavorsome aroma to the dining table on the occasion of Kuwait's national day celebrations.

Total time: 45 minutes
Serving : 6 people

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups of cooked basmati rice

To make the green layer puree:

- 1 cup spinach
- 1 green chilly
- 1/2 inch ginger
- 2 cloves garlic

To make the red layer puree:

- 2 tomatoes
- 1/2 inch ginger
- 2 cloves garlic
- Make the puree and set aside.

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 2 tbsp ghee (can be replaced with oil)
- 1/2 tsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste

Directions:

- Divide the cooked rice into three portions
- Heat 1 tbsp ghee in a wok. Add spinach puree, garam masala and salt to taste. Saute for about a minute on medium heat, then add one portion of the cooked rice. Mix gently and turn off the flame and remove content to a bowl
- Heat 1 tbsp ghee in the same pan, add cumin seeds and allow them to splutter
- Add tomato puree, chili powder, sugar, curry powder and salt to taste
- Saute for about a minute on medium heat, and add second portion of cooked rice. Reduce the heat to low, mix gently and turn off flame after a minute
- Remove the rice to a separate bowl
- Place remaining white rice as a layer at the bottom of serving platter
- Place the green rice in a band on top of white rice and flatten with a spoon
- Place the red rice in a band to the bottom portion of the white rice and flatten
- Decorate the left hand corner with black lentil curry, or black split olives in the shape of Kuwait's national flag
- Serve with any type of raita or plain yogurt.



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

Discrimination in hiring at coops violates human rights and Kuwait laws

The policy of some cooperative societies to discriminate against people based on their religious affiliation is against the tolerant values of Islam, against human rights and Kuwait's laws, as well as in violation of several international treaties to which Kuwait is a signatory.

In a statement issued recently following news of discrimination in employment by some cooperative societies, the Chairman of the Complaints and Grievances Committee and member of the



Board of Directors of the National Human Rights Bureau, Lawyer Ali al-Baghli pointed out that Article 29 of the Kuwaiti constitution stipulates that 'people are equal in human dignity, and they are equal before the law in public rights and duties, and there is no discrimination between them in this because of gender, origin, language or religion'.

He went on to also note that Article 2 of Part Two of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

which has been ratified by Kuwait and promulgated by Law No. (12) of 1996, states that: 'Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect the rights recognized therein, and to guarantee these rights to all individuals within its territory and within its jurisdiction, without any distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, or political or other opinion; or national or social origin, wealth, lineage, or other reasons.'

Al-Baghli stressed that Decree Law No. 24 of 1979 regarding cooperative societies, as amended by Law 118 of 2013, stipulates in

its first and second articles the definition of a cooperative society and its function, which cannot in any way go beyond cooperative work, and that it cannot take decisions that harm human rights, international covenants, and the constitution of Kuwait.

Al-Baghli called on the Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development and the President of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies to resort to the laws of the state that provide for justice, preserve human rights and prevent harm to the interests of individuals for the actions of others.



Indian Embassy organizes grande finale of 'Namaste Kuwait'

Embassy of India in association with Indian Cultural Network (ICN), Kuwait organized 'Namaste Kuwait', a week-long celebration of Indian arts, music, dance and cinema on the occasion of National Day of Kuwait and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav from 20 to 28 February at the embassy auditorium.

The grand finale of 'Namaste Kuwait' was held on 28 February, coinciding with National Science Day in India held annually in commemoration of the birth anniversary of renowned Indian physicist and Nobel laureate Sir C.V. Raman.

Ambassador of India H.E. Sibi George in his remarks on the occasion appreciated the strong people to people contact between India and Kuwait, and also highlighted the richness of Indian Culture and Civilization.

The seven-day celebration of 'Namaste



Kuwait' saw the staging of a wide range of Indian art and dances including classical and Bollywood dances, live musical performances by local artistes, yoga exercises and the screening of Indian movies. The event received enthusiastic response from Kuwait on the embassy's social media handles.

Integrated traffic-fine collection among GCC states



An integrated traffic project that will be implemented among all six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), will lead to a more efficient mechanism in the application of traffic fines and collection of penalties from traffic law violators, which currently amounts to tens of thousands of dinars each year.

Ministry of Interior has reportedly formed a committee to set up the appropriate mechanism for the unified traffic project in Kuwait. The committee, which is scheduled to complete its work by the end of March, will oversee the development of online links between the GCC states that will allow for real-time digital exchange of information and data on traffic violations and other data related to vehicles between the six GCC countries.

GCC countries are currently exchanging information on traffic violations such as speeding or crossing the red light, on a monthly basis, but the digital link will put an end to this practice from June 2022.

The new traffic project is expected to facilitate the transit of visiting citizens and

residents from GCC countries through host country airports, while also deterring the committing of traffic violations in the host countries, and encouraging them to abide by prevailing traffic laws and regulations.

Once the committee completes its work, the project will be implemented and begin collecting traffic fines in the country of the Gulf traveler and transfer them to the country where the violation was committed, instead of collecting the fine in the country where the violation was recorded.

The mechanism will facilitate the travel of violators without being stopped at the border exit port and having to pay the fines before exiting the country. The new mechanism will also prevent the violator from conducting any transaction until the fine is paid.

The project, which is expected to be rolled out in June, will be a gradual process and will be implemented in stages beginning with Saudi Arabia and then the UAE, followed by establishing links with the remaining four GCC countries.



So much more taste, so much more goodness.





Sole distributor in Kuwait

Al-Othman & Al-Bisher Trd.Co. W.L.L

P.O. Box: 22984 Safat 13090 Kuwait

Tel: +965 24755074, 24755073

Fax: +965 24760108

Email: obtcwt@qualitynet.net

www.obtcwt.com





@obtc_kwt



Further easing of restrictions as health situation improves



Coronavirus Higher Advisory Committee is to meet shortly and recommend to the Cabinet a series of measures aimed at easing of restrictions and health protocols set up in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. This follows the marked and sustained improvements in the COVID-19 epidemiological situation witnessed over the last few weeks.

The restrictions ameliorating steps being examined by the committee are reportedly geared at paving the way for the return to full normalcy without the need for any further health restrictions.

Among the recommendations are said to be abolishing the need for regular PCR test for

all students and teachers, allowing people to enter enclosed places, such as theaters and cinemas without the need to produce proof of a negative PCR test, as well as canceling the need to take a booster dose of the vaccine after nine months from receiving the second dose, and using the green color on the vaccination certificate for those who took the two doses.

Also the steps taken earlier to encourage the unvaccinated and raise awareness on the benefits of vaccination will gradually be phased out, as will the need to wear facemasks, while continuing to emphasize the importance of wearing masks in public places.

Health authorities are also expected to adopt a package of measures that would allow hospitals to return to the normal situation, and restart therapeutic work protocols at healthcare facilities, including at Al-Jaber Hospital that was earlier designated as a COVID-19 treatment center. The Mishref Center would also be shut down and vaccinations will continue to be provided only through healthcare centers located in various suburbs.

The Ministry of Health is also said to be studying the adoption of the new oral antiviral drug Paxlovid, developed by Pfizer, which has been found to reduce risk of hospitalization or death by 89 percent among non-hospitalized high-risk adults with COVID-19.

Kuwait ranks low in purchases of US arms

Kuwait ranks 22nd among the 25 countries that purchase the most amount of arms and ammunition from the United States, the country is also listed as the second smallest purchaser of US weapons among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

According to the report by online financial news and opinion company, 24/7 WallSt, over the ten-year period from 2010 to 2020, Kuwait purchased US\$1.37 billion worth of weapons from the United States, which represented over three-quarter of all its weapons purchases during the period. The country's weapons expenditure in 2020 amounted to \$6.9 billion, which is around 6.5 percent of Kuwait's GDP.

Among the GCC states, Saudi Arabia, the largest importer of American weapons in the world, brought weapons worth a whopping \$17.61 billion dollars, which constituted nearly 65 percent of the kingdom's total weapons imports. The second biggest importer of US weapons in the GCC was the United Arab Emirates, which purchased arms



worth a total of \$7.11 billion to rank 4th globally in terms of US weapon imports. Qatar, the third largest purchaser of US weapons in the GCC, was ranked 11th globally with its total purchase of \$3.33 billion worth of US arms and ammunition. Oman was the smallest purchaser of US weapons in the GCC, buying only weapons worth \$780 million during the decade under review.

United States is the world's largest arms exporter, since 2010, US arms manufacturers have shipped over \$105 billion worth of arms around the world. In 2020 alone, the US shipped nearly \$9.4 billion in arms to over 100 different countries around the world. In recent years, 22 countries have spent more than \$1 billion buying weapons from the United States. Besides the US, other countries also supply large consignments of weapons to the region and around the world, including Russia, China, and several other countries.

LuLu Exchange continues growth momentum with opening of 28th and 29th branches in Kuwait

The new branches are located in the commercial areas of Hawallay and Riggae



In continuation of its ambitious growth plans, LuLu Exchange – one of the nation's most trusted payments provider, opened its 28th and 29th branches at Hawallay and Riggae. The branches were inaugurated by Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, in the presence of senior company management.

The new branches extend the network under the holding company to 245 global branches, spread across 11 countries.

Addressing the gathering on the sidelines of the opening, Mr. Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, said, "Kuwait continues to see accelerated recovery in line with the improvement of the global economy. The nation's visionary leaders and people are to be credited for creating a favorable environment for business & life to thrive, and the opening of our new branches reaffirm our commitment to the nation's economy as a consumer-first financial services provider."

LuLu Financial Holdings has been in the news recently for its aggressive efforts aimed at digital transformation of its global branch network into consumer engagement centres.

Talking about the same, Shaiju Mohandas,



General Manager, LuLu Exchange Kuwait, added, "At a time when technology plays an important role in making people's lives better, we aim to become the most preferred brand among the people of Kuwait. As part of a global financial

services provider, we are taking all efforts to align our physical and digital capabilities to create affordable, reliable and trustworthy payment solutions that blend modern services with a human approach."



Upcoming residential cities inadequate to meet future demand

Cabinet authorizes Municipality to build labor cities

Kuwait Municipality has received authorization from the Council of Ministers to follow up and complete all necessary measures to provide the requisite number of suitable sites for building labor cities to house workers in both urban and industrial areas. The sites would be later transferred to the benefit of the Management of State Property sector of the Ministry of Finance, provided that the work is in line with stipulated rules and regulations and is developed in conformation with specified timetables and in accordance with the texts and procedures in force.



In this regard, The Cabinet during its regular session prior to the national holidays, discussed the letter from the Minister of Finance, which included the statement of the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority that none of the qualified companies have so far submitted their bids for the labor cities project in South Jahra. This resulted in the Supreme Committee issuing its decision to cancel the proposal of the labor cities project in this area in accordance with the provisions of Law No. (116) of 2014 regarding the partnership between the public and private sectors and its executive regulations, and the Municipality was informed about the situation.

For its part, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) submitted several suggestions and recommendations with regard to building labor cities, including that the number of residents in such cities should not exceed 150,000, and that the distribution of

residential buildings should be in the form of neighborhoods. The MOI also called for the installation of security cameras to monitor fences around, and entrance and exit gates into, the labor cities, so as to facilitate the process of security control in emergencies and in other security-breaching situations.

Other recommendations and requirements submitted by the MOI include that the project must be at least 5 kilometers away from the nearest residential city, and that the labor city must be surrounded by an outer wall with a height of 4 meters to hinder anyone climbing the wall from inside or outside, and the construction of a pathway along the fence, both on the inside and outside.

In addition there should be a security center established outside the residential area with a fence around it, and sufficient car parking facilities within the perimeter of the fence. There should also be separate entry gates for cars, trucks, and individuals, so that cars and trucks enter through specific gates, and pedestrians through another gate.

04- Establishing a security center (mini police station building) that contains car parking and a fence surrounding the building, provided that this center is located outside the city walls near the main gate of the city.

05- Housing is distributed in the form of neighborhoods with all its infrastructure services, streets, and parking lots, taking into account the provision of all living services within each of the neighborhoods, with the possibility of isolating any neighborhood individually from the rest of the neighborhoods and controlling entry and exit whenever necessary.

The ministry confirmed that it always seeks to reduce security-disrupting acts or work not to aggravate them, and we find that, in line with this approach, Law No. 61 of 2015 was issued regarding the organization and installation of cameras and security surveillance devices, after which Ministerial Resolution No. 5003 of 2015 was issued regarding technical specifications of cameras and security monitoring devices.

The 'Vision 2035 - New Kuwait' development plan, which aims to transform Kuwait into a financial, trade and cultural hub regionally and internationally, is based on seven pillars, including developing a 'sustainable living environment'. In line with this plan, the state has authorized the development of five major greenfield residential cities that would provide 65,500 new housing units for citizens by 2029 at a total cost of KD3.2 billion.

Estimations on current and future demands for housing units reveal that the planned cities will be inadequate to meet the present demands for housing as well as future needs. The best favorable estimate shows that the planned 65,500 units coming up in the five residential cities will be adequate to meet only 72 percent of the current housing requests, which as of the start of 2022 stands at 91,000 requests.

However, failure of the state to develop long-term plans to build more new residential cities in the run up to, and beyond 2029, means that the housing shortage is likely to continue well beyond the next decade. In addition, with around 8,000 new requests for housing units being added annually, the upcoming five cities will be totally insufficient to meet the 56,000 new residential demands expected to be in back-log by the end of the plan period in 2029.

The five upcoming residential cities that are currently in various stages of development are:

Jaber Al-Ahmad Residential City: The project located to the west of Kuwait City and around 22 km from the city center is nearly 95 percent complete and is expected to be handed over by the end of 2022.

The project, which covers an area of 12.4 square km and incorporates over 6,500 housing units, including plots, homes and apartments, is being built at a cost of KD325 million.

Al Mutla'a Residential City: The project located to the northwest of Kuwait City and around 40 km from the city center is nearing 65 percent completion and is expected to be completed by 2023.

Being built at a cost of KD2.1 billion and covering an area of 102 square km, the project will see the addition of 28,000 new residential plots to Kuwait's real estate market. Spread across 12 residential districts, the residents of the housing



units will have easy access to the integrated commercial, health and educational facilities that are coming up in the new city.

South Abdullah Al Mubarak: The project located to the southwest of Kuwait City and around 20 km from the city center is around 72 percent complete and is slated to be handed over by the end of 2025.

The project, with over 3,000 housing units covering an area of 4.3 square km and being developed at a cost of KD141 million, lies to the north of the new Al-Shaddiya University and is in close proximity to the Abdullah Al-Mubarak area.

South Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City: The project, which is still in preparatory phase with 14 percent completion, is expected to welcome residents only by 2029.

Located to the south of Kuwait and 65 km away from Kuwait City, the new city will cover an area of 60 square km and will comprise 25,000 housing units being built at a cost of KD570 million.

South Saad Al Abdullah Residential City: The project is still in the preparatory phase and has completed 13 percent of the work so far. It is expected to be handed over only by 2029.

Located to the west of Kuwait, 35 km from Kuwait City and 5 km from Jahra City, the project will see the development of 30,000 new residential units spread over an area of nearly 65 square km. The project is planned as a smart city with a sustainable and renewable urban environment to create a vibrant life for the youth of today.

Dar AlMuhamma attains ISO Quality Management Certification

Dar AlMuhamma, a leading law firm in Kuwait, attained the ISO certificate (9001:2015) in line with the firm's strategy of keeping pace with the latest international systems in the quality of management and legal advice. The certification is also part of the plans by the firm's management to develop continuously and strengthen its commitment towards its clients.



services, as well as to provide legal advice, legal research and contracts, whether civil, commercial, labor, oil, and others inside and outside the State of Kuwait, with the aim of making the firm a distinguished model in this field.

Al-Houti stated that the firm gained ground locally and internationally by the expertise of distinguished and

competent lawyers and legal advisors. In addition, the firm has a large group of legal and administrative researchers meeting the highest professional levels.

He concluded by confirming that the firm fulfills its commitments to its clients, including individuals, as well as local and international companies, and continues to strive for excellence at the local, regional and international levels.

Speaking on the ISO certification, CEO of Dar AlMuhamma, Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al-Houti, said that the success of obtaining the ISO certificate was the result of systematic efforts geared towards developing the standards of the quality management system to meet the needs of clients in this regard.

He added that since the establishment of the firm, the vision was to implement all future plans to reach the finest and best

Open Buffet

INDIAN BUFFET 4.5KD

ARABIC BUFFET 5KD

(Soft Drinks & Water Inclusive)

A la Carte menu 7 AM to 10 PM (Indian & Mughlai Cuisines)

KUWAIT CONTINENTAL HOTEL

22527300; Ext:5, 94075442 | 94075445 | 97538934

Darbar
کارباز
RESTAURANT

Gender equality today for



H.E. Aliya Mawani
Ambassador of Canada

During your tenure in Kuwait what is your opinion about women's empowerment in society?

Kuwait is full of talented, creative and inspiring women, and I have been fortunate to meet many of them during my first few months here. These women are trailblazers in their fields — from business, to education and academia, healthcare and wellness, law, the arts, media, climate action, and community mobilization, to name but a few. But they're not stopping at just leading the way. They are actively involved in empowering other women, through education, advocacy, and mentoring and by building alliances and partnerships with government, private sector and civil society to ensure that women have equal access to opportunities and that their rights are respected and protected.

I've been so impressed by the organizations and initiatives that I have come across since arriving here, as well as the number of men who are stepping-up as allies and champions of women's empowerment. Like anywhere, though, there are challenges. Some women and girls are well-aware of their rights, but others less so, because they lack access to information and support. And, unfortunately, there are people who seem to view women's empowerment as a threat, instead of something positive that will benefit and enrich society as a whole. Since being here, however, I've learned that Kuwait has always been a regional leader when it comes to women's empowerment. This rich history, combined with all of the impressive efforts to empower women in Kuwait, makes me very hopeful for the future.

Women are increasingly participating in leadership roles. Do you see this trend rising and what do you feel should be done so that their participation can be increased?

Around the world and across all sectors we are increasingly seeing women in leadership roles. I'm thrilled to see this trend! The fact that the active and accomplished group of women ambassadors here in Kuwait is growing, and that we all are able to represent our countries without obstacles, is a sign that things are moving in a positive direction.

Having more women in leadership is good for everyone. Data shows that high-performing businesses tend to have more women in leadership roles, and that companies that have the greatest diversity (whether gender, ethnic, and/or racial) are more likely

to have financial returns above their industry's average. It also shows that having women leading and being involved in negotiations and decision-making increases the likelihood of achieving effective and sustainable solutions. This is why Canada has made gender equality a priority in both our foreign policy and our international assistance policy.

While the trend in women's leadership is positive, it is not something that 'just happens'. More can and needs to be done to get women into leadership roles. For example, sponsorship and mentoring are essential to identify and encourage women to take on senior roles. All institutions, whether public or private, need to make deliberate policy decisions to increase the number of women leaders in their organizations and then ensure that their hiring and talent development practices reflect these commitments. Having more gender equity in leadership is not only the right thing to do, it benefits us all.

In your career have you faced discrimination or hurdles being a woman?

I have had many wonderful opportunities throughout my career, but I have also faced challenges. I've had my role as the head of a delegation or my presence in meetings questioned because I'm a woman, relatively young, and "don't really look Canadian"; been excluded from key events because assumptions were made that I wouldn't be comfortable in predominantly male settings; and, unfortunately, dealt with harassment by male bosses aimed at undermining my confidence in my judgment and abilities. These experiences have been frustrating, but I've found that getting angry does not help fix the situation. My most powerful tool has been to demonstrate clearly that I can do the job, that I excel at what I do, and that I belong at the table. I have benefited immensely from having allies and mentors to encourage and guide me along the way, and I am committed to providing that same support for others.

What is your take on the 2022 IWD theme '#BreakTheBias' or the UN theme 'Gender Equality today for a Sustainable Tomorrow'?

To me, #BreakTheBias is about every one of us doing whatever we can, each and every day, to break biases and stereotypes that stand in the way of gender equality. These biases may be in our families, our communities, or our workplaces. They may be obvious, or subtle. The actions we take will be varied. It could be something as simple as taking a moment to amplify the voice or idea of a woman you respect. It might be something a bit more uncomfortable, like challenging someone expressing views against gender equality. It might even be participating in a demonstration to advocate for policy change. Each step we take in challenging these biases, little by little, will help us to achieve a world in which diversity is valued and celebrated; a world which is equitable and inclusive; and one where the empowerment of women is regarded not as a threat but as a strength. It starts with us.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Empowering women and girls to have a voice and be equal players in decision-making related to climate change and sustainability is essential for sustainable development and greater gender equality. Without gender equality today, a sustainable future, and an equal future, remains beyond our reach. So from this

year's IWD let us commit ourselves to supporting greater gender equality in every sphere of life and ensure a sustainable, equitable future for everyone.

Here, we take a look at some thoughts on women's empowerment by several opinion-formers and women diplomats accredited to Kuwait, as well as their answers to a questionnaire we sent out to them ahead of this year's IWD.



H.E. Haja Ishata Thomas
Ambassador of Sierra Leone

During your tenure in Kuwait, what is your opinion about women's empowerment in society?

Women's empowerment in Kuwaiti society is a work in progress. There have been significant strides leading to increased access in many spheres, including education, politics, economics and finance. The prohibition of gender discrimination in employment enhances economic empowerment and the country has been commended by international financial institutions such as the World Bank for such efforts that seek to empower women economically. Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential in ensuring a country's sustainable development.

That is why fora such as Kuwait Women's Conference which meets annually to discuss challenges and approaches in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) on gender equality and women's empowerment is championed by the Women's Research and Studies Center at Kuwait University and fully supported by the State. The appointment of Her Excellency Mrs. Dr. Rana Abd Allah Abd Al-Rahman Al-Faris to head the dual ministries of Municipal Affairs and Communication and Information Technology, respectively in the current government is also indicative of the work in progress I refer to, as there is still room for improvement to integrate and bring about women, realizing their full potential to benefit fully and equally in all aspects of development.

How have you found women in Kuwait during your interaction with them in terms of their emancipation, education and outlook?

I find Kuwaiti women to be resilient, hardworking and forward-thinking in dealing with challenges to their emancipation, education and outlook in a patriarchal society. They are engaged in civil society activism, where they make their voices heard, thereby influencing policy decisions on women's affairs. They also excel in governance, education, the arts, law and entrepreneurship, proving that if fully empowered, they can become solid partners in promoting socio-economic development in the country. Of course, all of these is being made possible with the support of the State and the leadership, which is keen on seeing women play an active role in all spheres of Kuwaiti society.

What is your take on 'gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'?

At the center of every sound development agenda is the core value of sustenance, which is captured in all the first six of the UN SDGs (poverty alleviation,

zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation). The key driver among them is gender equality. History bears witness to the selfless sacrifices of women in their daily struggle against all odds to attain the above goals in their families long before SDGs were conceived. I, therefore, support the stance of many world leaders and scholars, who argue that attaining sustainable development is a herculean task without gender equality and women's empowerment.

In your career have you faced discrimination or hurdles being a woman?

Yes, but I would prefer to call them challenges to overcome, and Alhamdulillah for the progress being made, otherwise I would not have been the person I am today. My country Sierra Leone, like many countries around the world, has a patriarchal culture that is characterized by the supremacy of men in the family and within wider social institutions. This gives men a disproportionately large share of power and control over women. However, we have come a long way as a nation in addressing such unequal power relations between men and women and I am very proud of our achievements, which are clearly evidenced in my appointment as an Ambassador representing my country in the State of Kuwait. Let me add that mine is not an isolated case as countless women have been empowered in all spheres of societal life in my country.

Women are increasingly participating in leadership roles. Do you see this trend rising, and what do you feel should be done so that their participation can be increased?

The importance of gender issues in national development cannot be overemphasized. It is reflected in nations around the world, particularly in the global south with its bulging youthful population, taking bold steps in incorporating gender policies in their national development blueprints. Women's participation in leadership roles is part of this bigger picture I see unfolding and becoming the norm because women have been tried and tested and they have delivered excellent outcomes. This is unraveling long-held gender-stereotypical behavior confronted with evidence that gender is just a social construct which should therefore not be used to determine the true potentials of women. To ensure their continued participation, women need to be empowered in all spheres of societal life through gender mainstreaming, thereby ensuring that both women and men are made to influence, participate in and benefit from development processes.

Anything else you might like to add?

The struggle for gender empowerment is not an adversary to societal male dominance and it should not be seen as such. It is a complementary tool designed to bring about the collaborative efforts of both men and women in pulling available resources together to enhance a country's greater socio-economic development for the benefit of all. As gender roles are ascribed and vary from society to society, it is therefore our responsibility as citizens of the world to ensure that rather than inhibiting us, gender roles should be made to work in tandem with our global development goals.

Happy Women's Day To All

a sustainable tomorrow



H.E. Claudia Alejandra Zampieri
Ambassador of Argentina

About women's empowerment in society:
I am sure that if women occupied more positions as decision makers there would be

fewer conflicts in the world. Women have a better holistic view of reality than men, and can more accurately assess the consequences that violent male decision-makers' postures can have on society.

About Gender Equality and Sustainable tomorrow:

Unfortunately, today in many regions and countries, girls and women have restricted or limited access to education, which is why they are not in a position to understand the impact that their simple daily behaviors can have on the environment. A better education for them would have a positive impact on the protection of nature and their own quality of life.

Only through equitable access to education for girls and women will we be able to talk about a sustainable future.



H.E. Belinda Lewis
Ambassador of United Kingdom

“

During the course of my career, as a manager, mentor and human resources director, I have found that more women than men tend to lack the confidence to go for promotion or apply for the more popular jobs. I think there are many reasons why this might be the case. My advice is not to overthink these applications. If you like the sound of a job, or you would enjoy the challenge of taking on more responsibility, then just have a go. There is no need to feel embarrassed if you are not successful. But no matter how good you are, it is hard to progress in your career if you do not put yourself forward.

”



H.E. Halima Abdille Mahmoud
Ambassador of Kenya

In your career have you faced discrimination or hurdles being a woman

I have not come across direct/overt discrimination due to my gender, but I have encountered several challenges during my years as a leader. This is mainly due to negative cultural stereotypes that believe

that women are not as competent as men in leadership. However, I have never let these negative attitudes deter me from my ambition to serve the people during my years in public service.

Women are increasingly participating in leadership roles do you see this trend rising and what do you feel should be done so that their participation can be

I have noted a tremendous rise in women taking leadership roles across the globe. This is a positive trend because for too long women's voices have not been heard and it is important that their views and perspectives are taken into consideration.

Constitutional safeguards are needed to anchor women into leadership positions. I am pleased to note that Kenya has adopted a progressive constitution that has ensured that no gender constitutes more than a two-thirds majority in leadership positions. A global effort is needed on a multilateral level to ensure that all countries adopt policies that are gender inclusive.



H.E. Nisreen Rubaian
UNHCR Representative to Kuwait

During your tenure in Kuwait what is your opinion about women's empowerment in society?

Kuwait have been known for its progressive change throughout history in empowering women, i have been here for the past 6 months as a representative for UNHCR to the state of Kuwait, and i have met Kuwaiti women taking leadership roles in government and private sector in addition to civil societies, all of them were sophisticated, knowledgeable and humble. This reflects how the government has been preparing the infrastructure to take lead, Kuwaiti women had access to education, gained political and economic rights, in addition to financial independence long before many nations did.

How have you found women in Kuwait during your interaction with them in terms of their emancipation, education and outlook?

Kuwaiti women have been recognized as pioneers in many fields in the region, I have learned a lot about the amazing Kuwaiti ladies who broke the mold back in the 60s and 70s and maybe even before, in the social, educational, political, intellectual and even in arts and theater! The first Arab woman to be president of a university is the Kuwaiti Dr. Faiza Al-Kharafi for example. We are now experiencing women being designated as Judges in court, and this alone is a breakthrough achievement not only for Kuwaiti women but all Arab women.

I have felt how the Government encourages the engagement of women in senior leadership roles in alignment of SDG 5 on gender equality and vision 2035 through various activities and pilots.

What is your take on Gender Equality today for a Sustainable Tomorrow?

All women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change, which are increased because of the vulnerability and insecurity of their situations while they are displaced. Yet, displaced women can and do play a critical role in responding to climate change central to the stability, preparedness and resilience of their families and communities to climate shocks; sources of knowledge and leadership in sustainably managing household and community resources under difficult circumstances, and four main aspects should be at the core of gender-responsive approaches in the context of climate change and displacement:

- Inclusion and leadership
- Economic empowerment
- Protection of rights
- Well-being

In your career have you faced discrimination or hurdles being a woman?

I am lucky to work in an organization that encourages equal opportunities and equal access to men and women, and I see it as I lead an office of 18 colleagues, most of them are women. Throughout my career with UNHCR I was surrounded with inspiring women who showed me resilience and encouraged me to be outspoken as a woman and as a junior humanitarian worker at that time.

Women are increasingly participating in leadership roles. Do you see this trend rising and what do you feel should be done so that their participation can be increased?

This trend is definitely rising, we see women taking over what was once a 100% male dominated field. I am proud to say that I have seen refugee women lead in sports and society, also in reshaping policies, even with all the hardships and obstacles they had to face. This shows the ultimate perseverance and courage a woman can showcase. One major point is that Education is key, and education opportunities are becoming more accessible, more women have the chance to shine and to be taken seriously. Education is the mirror of women's development. We live in a different world, it's very fast paced, and women are definitely keeping up, and will need all the tools to make it in all fields as it gets more competitive.

Anything else you might like to add?

Happy international Women's day to every woman: leading and fighting and struggling to shine and reach her full potential.

To all the women out there : we are proud of you. We support you. And we hope that one day we see men and women equal to each other in all walks of life.

Who do we celebrate when we celebrate International Women's Day?



Shaikha Al-Hashem
Special to
The Times Kuwait

of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all.

For its part the International Women's Day, an online platform that helps forge positive change for women everywhere, had last year selected the theme #ChoosetoChallenge, where we were asked to make a choice by challenging and calling out gender bias and inequality. The campaign also encouraged us to seek out and choose to celebrate women's successes and achievements.

But if we are to set out and 'choose to challenge' then there is much to challenge. The women workers of New York broke convention and challenged the status quo. What are we to challenge here in Kuwait? What is worth marching out for? What struggles do we take to the public sphere? What are our priorities? We must look beyond the veneer that just because women in Kuwait got their suffrage, we now have equal rights. The struggle goes much deeper than mere votes. We have still not had a fair share of representatives in the National Assembly. The last elections were a defeat in the name of Kuwaiti women.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

International Women's Day was born out of a group of women workers who decided to rise up in the early 1900s against inequality, disenfranchisement, and lack of rights for women in the United States. The fifteen thousand women who reportedly marched in the streets of New York City in February 1908 demanding equality, could be said to have paved the way for women around the world.

Similar movements and marches followed in Europe and elsewhere. In 1975, the year the United Nations celebrated as International Women's Year, the global body recognized 8 March as International Women's Day. In the following years the UN began adopting annual themes for the day; this year's theme is 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. The theme calls for recognizing the contribution

Restaurant sector still grappling to recover from COVID-era



Restaurants, cafes and catering services in Kuwait are still struggling to recover from the aftermath of the two-year long COVID-19 crisis that devastated much of their business, due to restrictions imposed on entry to dine-in venues and on the mobility of people.

In a recent media interview, head of the Kuwait Federation of Restaurants, Cafes and Catering Services, Fahd Al-Arbash said that despite the passage of two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the industry as a whole continues to suffer from its economic repercussions.

He warned that this difficult phase could continue for another five years unless the state moves at various levels to lend support to the local economy and to open the country to tourism and employment.

This extended period of suffering is caused by the fact that a large segment of restaurant and cafe owners have become crippled with big financial loans due to accumulated rents

during the closure period of commercial and economic activities, in addition to employee salaries and other entitlements.

Al-Arbash stressed that despite the return of life to normal in the country, the activity of the restaurant sector has not returned to its previous era, as evidenced by the low number of diners who frequented restaurants during the National Day and Liberation Day celebrations, as many people had chosen to travel abroad during the extended holidays.

Pointing out that a large percentage of restaurants are now depending on delivery orders to survive, Al-Arbash added that restaurants which benefited from the

citizens' turnout were those located in major commercial complexes. However, these restaurants constitute only 20 percent of the total restaurants operating in Kuwait, while the remaining 80 percent of restaurants witnessed a significant decline in their revenues.

He also drew attention to the significant rise in the prices of many foodstuffs, and noted that this increase further eroded the profits and operations of restaurants and cafes that remained committed to their price lists. He also warned that the stability of the restaurant business was at stake, and that the absence of state support for young people in charge of these restaurants have put a dent to their dreams.

Everyone should prepare for a new wave of inflation, which will most likely not be temporary

While the hike in oil prices strongly revives the budget revenues of Kuwait, which has been suffering from consecutive deficits for nearly 7 years, it seems that the path to record prices will not be in one direction.

The unpleasant surprise here is that whenever the price of oil rises, there will be a parallel rise in the prices of food and consumer goods, which makes the hypothesis that markets will move in the coming period to a more severe inflation wave, given that energy prices are related to the manufacture and supply of all commodities, says a local Arabic daily.

As a result, the double revenue that the general budget will derive from the restoration of oil to its historical levels, after Brent was close

\$120 a barrel, compared to the lowest level it reached in the last 20 years at \$15.98, specifically on April 19, 2020, accelerated the pace of the rise in food and consumer prices, taking into account that it has recently recorded unprecedented rates, since the collapse of global financial markets in the mid-1980s.

The high cost of fuel, in turn, puts pressure on the overall prices, which nonetheless poses a danger to the consumer, amid the rising costs of transportation, which have affected the various sectors, especially food and consumer goods of all the sectors

As a result, every home in Kuwait and around the world began to feel the high prices, which some described as crazy, driven by the

impact of political tensions, and before that the Corona pandemic, whose repercussions were the interruption of global supply chains at times, and their slowdown at other times, which eventually led to strengthening the course of transportation and insurance costs, some of which have recently grown at rates that have reached tens of times their previous prices.

It is noteworthy to make a mention that the International Monetary Fund had warned earlier of the rise in the prices of commodities and foodstuffs during the coming period, especially with the emergence of some indicators confirming the rise in inflation rates, noting that the local inflation records rose last January to 4.3 percent on an annual basis, according to data issued by the Central Department of Statistics.

Considering that Kuwait is an importer in the first place of all major commodities, especially food, construction materials, and electronic devices, everyone should prepare for a new wave of inflation, which will most likely not be temporary, but rather extended, supported by what is happening with companies and the pricing mechanism globally. Of course, these expectations will remain present until the



changes in data and facts that could curb the acceleration of inflation globally.

It is clear that the stage of high prices to worrying levels will be long, and this was confirmed by international experts, as they expected more price increases and

their continuation, and what reinforces these expectations is a combination of unprecedented factors that disturb the atmosphere of inflation, not least that the recovery of supply chains, and their return to normal, needs 3 years according to the estimates of international institutions.

Government sources have ruled out the option of granting any additional subsidies to citizens in the coming period, in the face of the current wave of price hikes, whether in cash, or by increasing the food and quantities or construction supplies.

The sources said that the current network of subsidies is in line with the liquidity conditions of the General Reserve Fund, and the recorded deficit, despite its decline compared to the rates achieved last year, noting that the support currently provided for major commodities will remain at its rates, which are very reliable in calming prices.

Who do we celebrate when we celebrate International Women's Day?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Our laws need massive revision and others outright elimination, for several articles explicitly discriminate against women. We, as women, have a lot to do to receive equal health services for example. The bylaws at the Ministry of Health discriminate against women. Single women have no right to demand for basic gynaecological examinations, while married women cannot undergo any procedure without the consent of their husbands. In the education sector, mothers are not considered an authorized signatory for their children. Kuwaiti mothers married to foreigners still cannot pass citizenship to their children. And domestic violence is still very prevalent.

But International Women's Day when celebrated in Kuwait is not just about Kuwaiti women. It is a day to think of and appreciate all women. I think here of migrant women workers who have left their families behind, who struggle by putting others first, who suffer in silence and who persist despite all the dire conditions. When we meet these women, whether they are baristas, saleswomen, cashiers, nurses, manicurists, and domestic workers, they smile and greet us hiding behind unimaginable anxiety and anguish. They are strangers in a land they know will be a temporary stay for them. They will either return when their time is up, or continue to tread the path in the migration chain.

I also think of the stateless women who want nothing more than to be recognized as human; a human who deserves to belong to a community.

A human who has the right to education, health and equal and secure job opportunity. I

think of stateless mothers who live in torment worrying about the future of their children, and trying hard to make their unlivable conditions liveable. Stateless women face a higher risk of domestic violence as well as community violence; their struggle with the patriarchy is far more than we can ever conceive of.

That the exploitation and oppression of women across the world still thrives means that we are perhaps centuries away before standing on an equal footing with our male counterparts; before dismantling gender bias; before demolishing the roots of the patriarchal systems; before needing to remind the world that women exist and have an assigned day to celebrate them. We, as women, have a lot of work ahead of us and it is not a smooth road but it is necessary for us to tread and march on.

On this day then, we must celebrate, honor, protect, and stand in solidarity with all migrant and stateless women. They are our sisters and our struggles are one. We must honor, protect and support victims and survivors of domestic violence, migrants, stateless and citizens. To eliminate gender-based discrimination, we need to first eliminate discrimination amongst us as women. It is time that women across Kuwait unite!

Shaikha Al-Hashem is a writer and researcher from Kuwait focusing on women, migrant workers and the political economy. Shaikha is also a PhD Candidate in The European Graduate School, in the Philosophy, Art and Critical Theory (PACT) Program. Her specialization is in women and gender studies. She tweets @AlHashemShaikha

Kuwait Airways all set to fly higher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Organised annually, the event highlighted the trends, insights and opportunities driving the continuous growth and development of the Arab aviation and tourism industry.

On the sidelines of the summit Razouki told The Times Kuwait that the way forward for the airline was looking at opportunities of collaboration and opening doors to partnerships like code sharing etc.

He was optimistic on growth of the airline pointing out that during the pandemic they understood the need for partnerships and sustainability. On the impact of the pandemic on the aviation industry he said that any airline that felt it could conquer the world after coming out of the pandemic would have a very big struggle.

If the rise in fuel prices and possibility of airfare hikes might impact travel, Razouki said the cost of jet fuel was 15 per cent of their total cost and any fluctuation would have an impact but they had a full revenue management team and they would continue to remain competitive in the market.

He indicated that Kuwait was going through transformation within the government sector,

and their relationship with DGCA and ministry of interior was to ensure that more passengers could pass through Kuwait either transit or tourism. The challenge, he pointed out came from capacity and capabilities and this would change when the brand new airport was opened in 2025 and Kuwait Airways would be ready to undertake this challenge.

Razouki pointed out that they are working with the regulator (DGCA) and the government in ensuring the growth of the airline and overcoming hurdles.

He pointed out that the airline was also on a talent and acquisition hunt with more than 400 vacancies opening up to keep pace with the growth of the airline.

Last month Kuwait Airways announced the increase in the number of planes it planned to purchase from Airbus to 31 from 28 with a estimating the value of the deal at \$3 billion.

The order was for nine Airbus A320neo, six A321neo, three A321neo LR, four A330-800neo, seven A330-900neo and two A350-900.

Last year the CEO Maen Razoqi said that the airline was seeking aircraft capable of operating longer, non-stop flights so it could expand in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and North America.

Higher crude prices lead to windfall revenues for GCC states



Higher crude oil prices since the start of the year received a further boost last week with the Russia-Ukraine conflict taking prices over the \$100 per barrel mark that was last seen in 2014.

Oil trading above \$100 per barrel allows most Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to register windfall revenues above their financial break-even points and notch large budget surpluses in the current financial year. According to estimates by

the International Monetary Fund (IMF), if oil continues to remain over the \$100 per barrel mark all major oil producers in the Middle East, with the possible exception of Bahrain, will run budget surpluses.

Saudi Arabia, which needs oil at around \$72 a barrel to balance the budget, has said it expects to post a surplus this year. For the UAE, this figure is about \$67 a barrel. Bahrain needs prices of more than \$106 a barrel.

Increased focus on fiscal discipline after a period of relatively low oil prices during the COVID-19 crisis means that most Gulf states are unlikely to increase spending.

In Saudi Arabia, officials have said they would use the windfall gains to prepare for the future. This is part of the kingdom's efforts and strategy to diversify its economy as demand for fossil fuels declines and there is greater uptake of renewable sources of energy.

Higher crude prices and higher production of oil and gas, as well as limited government spending, will also allow the

GCC states to register lower fiscal breakeven prices to balance the budget in 2022, according to the Institute of International Finance (IIF).

According to the IIF, Qatar will have the lowest Gulf fiscal breakeven of \$44 per barrel (pb) in 2022, down from \$52 pb in 2021. Bahrain, the smallest Gulf oil producer, will have the highest fiscal breakeven of \$76pb in 2022, down from \$82pb in 2021. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, will see its fiscal breakeven fall to \$67pb in 2022, from \$75pb in 2021.

The UAE, the third biggest OPEC producer, will benefit from a drop in its fiscal breakeven to \$64pb in 2022, from \$69pb in 2021. OPEC member Kuwait will see its fiscal breakeven decline to \$61pb in 2022, from \$65pb in 2021. Oman, the biggest Middle East oil producer outside the OPEC group, will have a lower fiscal breakeven of \$67pb in 2022, compared with \$74pb in 2021.

Overall, economic growth in the Gulf region is expected to accelerate in 2022,

from 2021. The UAE will register the highest Gulf economic growth of 4.9 percent in 2022, up from 2.2 percent in 2021, while Oman will have the lowest economic growth of 3.3 percent in 2022, up from 2.2 percent in 2021. Saudi Arabia's economy, the biggest in the Arab world, will have the second-highest growth rate of 4.8 percent in 2022, up from 1.9 percent in 2021.

Kuwait, which recorded the lowest economic growth of 0.4 percent in 2021 among its GCC peers, is expected to grow by a remarkable 4 percent in 2022, and Bahrain's economy will accelerate 3.5 percent in 2022, from 3 percent in 2021, according to the IIF. Economic growth in Qatar is also expected to accelerate to 3.8 percent in 2022, from 3.1 percent in 2021. Qatar currently has an LNG production capacity of some 77 million metric tonnes per year but has plans to boost it to 110 million metric tonnes per year with the addition of four more trains, and to 126 million metric tonnes per year with two additional trains.

IOM strategies in tandem with Kuwait's priorities

Last week the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched a road map for its missions in the region, based on effective partnerships with the countries in the area and guided by the organization's regional strategy.

In an interview with media at the launch of the program, Head of IOM mission in Kuwait, Mazen Abul-Hassan, said that cooperation with Kuwait is built on humanitarian partnership, to reach the largest possible number of people affected by disasters and wars.



He added that in Kuwait, the work of the organization follows the general framework of its strategy, with the selection of objectives being in line with Kuwait's priorities in relation to the governance of migration.

He noted that the goals of IOM largely intersect with the components of Kuwait's development plan Vision 2035 and contribute to achieving the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) outlined by the United Nations.

He highlighted that a number of SDGs recognize the economic value of migrants, including goals 5, 8, 10, 16 and 17, and in particular, clause 7 of goal 10 which calls for facilitating "safe, regular and responsible migration," and implementing "safe, regular and responsible migration policies."

Abu Mazen added that IOM will work with Kuwait to link the SDGs and Kuwait Vision 2035 development plan, especially with regard to:

- Promoting comprehensive and sustainable economic growth for all.
- Full and productive employment.
- Providing decent work for all.
- Eliminate forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other types of exploitation.

He stressed that one of the objectives of the regional strategy is to work as a partner for Gulf governments in supporting the humanitarian and emergency response to countries outside the Gulf region, conflict-affected communities, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

In this regard, he stated that the organization works with companies, institutions and individuals on the basis of partnership, as the active participation of the private sector is critical to advancing humanitarian and development goals. This partnership includes raising funds from the private sector for humanitarian projects, exchanging experiences, working on technology in the humanitarian field, and other common topics.

Abul-Hassan concluded by stating "We affirm the depth of the partnership that brings together the IOM and the State of Kuwait, and the cooperation that brings us together in all relevant humanitarian fields, and we look forward to the continuation of this partnership, in order to achieve the sustainable development goals and the global agreement for safe, orderly and regular migration."

National, Liberation Day celebrations launch at LuLu Hypermarket

LuLu Hypermarket, the retail-leader in the region, which launched its annual LuLu Hala February celebrations on 1 February, is offering double excitement for shoppers on the National and Liberation Days that fall on 25th and 26th February respectively.

Special celebrations dedicated to the country's national day began on 23 February with an event at the Al-Qurain outlet that was inaugurated by Mahmoud Abdul Samad Bushehri, the Governor Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, in the presence of top LuLu management and a gathering of shoppers.

In addition to all outlets of the hypermarket being decked-up in glittering lights, decorative arches and colorful buntings as part of the Hala February celebrations, the Al-Qurain outlet wore a singular look that added to the festive ambiance, with large cut-outs of iconic structures and colorful images of buildings and places in Kuwait.

The artistic themes and backdrop images reflect the two commemorative days with small and large national flags fluttering everywhere, and color combinations of the Kuwaiti flag setting the tone for many of the decorations visible around the hypermarket's outlets. Adding excitement to the event there were artists applying face paint to create the national flag on the cheeks of children.

A very special attraction this year at the Al-Qurain outlet is a 7-meter tall display of the iconic Kuwait Towers, crafted artistically by stacking more than 17,000 tetra packets of KDD milk and fruit juices one on top of the other. Understandably, a large crowd of shoppers stopped to click 'selfies' in front of this amazing sculpture.

Stupendous discounts on all categories of products are being offered to mark the national holidays, with especially attractive prices on all Kuwait produced products. In addition, a slew of promotions are being held throughout the month of February, starting with the 'Voucher' promotion that began on 3rd February. During this



promotion, every purchase worth KD5 enters the shopper in a draw with the chance of winning 131 gift vouchers worth a total of KD15,000.

Each week of the LuLu Hala February festival is being made even more exciting with a 'Brand of the Week' promotion, offering amazing discounts on products from that specific brand. In addition, there will be a 'Product of the Day' promotion on each day of the month-long festival, during which one specific product labeled 'Special Deal of the Day' will be on offer at a very special price.

From 16 February, LuLu Hypermarket outlets have been featuring a 'Proudly from Kuwait' promotion highlighting special products produced in Kuwait, including farm-fresh fruits and vegetables offered at attractive prices.

Additionally, to mark Kuwait's 61st anniversary of National Day on 25 February, 61 exciting offers are available from 23 February. Also, for six days from 23 to 28 February, 600 trolley-load of

purchases will be available totally free to the lucky winners of this promotion.

Moreover, during the entire festival period beginning from 2 February, special discount sales will be held on select product categories, including on fashionwear, footwear, ladies bags, eye-wear, toys and accessories for babies. Moreover, Hala digitech is offering shoppers discounted prices on mobiles, gadgets, laptops, consumer electronics, home appliances and more.

On the food side, 'Exotic Cuts' offer a meat feast to premium meat lovers, while 'Shrimply Awesome' deals provide seafood lovers with a fish fest unlike any other. Other food-based festivities include, 'Say Cheese with Olives', and 'Biryani Express'.

The month-long LuLu Hala February festival is a continuation of the brand's commitment to making shopping at any LuLu Hypermarket outlet an exciting and enjoyable experience throughout the year for customers.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Lasting harm of COVID-19 school closures



SUSAN DYNARSKI AND RACHEL GLENNERSTER

Susan Dynarski is Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a faculty research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research and a 2020 Carnegie Fellow.

Rachel Glennerster is a former chief economist at the UK Department for International Development and former executive director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at MIT, is a professor in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago.



eligible students, and providing as much ventilation as possible — can reduce the risk of transmission in schools. With such measures in place, the chance of catching COVID-19 at school is much lower than in most other environments, especially restaurants and bars, where masking is not possible.

But while schools may have reopened, that does not mean business as usual. COVID-19 disruption has aggravated existing education inequalities, making teaching and learning more difficult. That is why schools must first assess just how badly the disruption has hurt students' learning. School districts then need to allow teachers to adjust instruction to reflect where children are in their learning, not where one might hope they are. This has been one of the main lessons from recent education research. Applying this approach to high-school students in Chicago resulted in a 20 percent jump in their test scores, and in Uttar Pradesh, India, the number of children who could read a paragraph or story doubled.

To do this, teachers will need support. They now face classrooms with an even wider range of learning outcomes than before, and many must navigate new challenges such as simultaneously juggling remote and in-person teaching. Research shows that providing guided lesson plans can be a cost-effective way to improve learning outcomes. And dozens of studies in high- and low-income countries have shown that individual or small-group tutoring for struggling students boosts scores.

“ But while schools may have reopened, that does not mean business as usual. COVID-19 disruption has aggravated existing education inequalities, making teaching and learning more difficult. ”

Finally, we should capitalize on some of the innovative education gains that occurred during the pandemic. Across the US, many parents who normally had little interaction with school suddenly had to help their children with online lessons. While this level of involvement is unsustainable over the long term, experiments in France and Chile have shown that children benefit when their parents are more connected to their schools. In Botswana, innumeracy declined by 31% in school districts that stayed in touch with parents and children through text messages and phone calls when schools were closed.

While the pandemic has greatly damaged students' learning, urgent, large-scale, and effective action by governments and education leaders could stem the tide. Without such intervention, the current level of learning loss caused by school disruptions will lead to trillions of dollars of lost productivity. And new crises are bound to arise. Establishing systems now to keep schools open in such circumstances will help protect our children and our future.

Determining how to balance COVID-19 risks in schools around the world has been tricky. While US school leaders are currently debating whether students should be required to wear face masks, schools in Uganda recently reopened for the first time since the pandemic began. But although

students in poorer countries have suffered more severe disruption, with schools closed for twice as long as in rich countries and sparse opportunities for remote learning, the current global cohort of schoolchildren will be adversely affected for decades to come. Without urgent action, the economic cost alone of school closures will be in the trillions of dollars.

Getting students back into the classroom has been critically important, but we still need immediate and targeted action to reduce learning losses. In addition, policymakers need to reflect on the tradeoffs they have made (such as keeping bars and restaurants open while shutting students out of school), account for the cost of these decisions, and establish practices and policies for managing future COVID-19 waves or the next pandemic.

During the past year, we worked with a global group of researchers to gather evidence about the pandemic's impact on children's education, and to identify the best ways to repair the damage. Unusually, our panel comprised researchers working on low-, middle-, and high-income countries, and included economists, psychologists, and education specialists. Despite the diversity of our expertise, the lessons we drew were starkly similar.

We found that, around the world, children returned to school following pandemic-induced closures with learning levels below those typical for their age. Studies show large learning losses, from one-third of a year in Ohio to a full year in Karnataka, India. This is worrisome, because evidence suggests that once students fall behind the curriculum, they find it difficult to catch up without additional support. Moreover, disruptions to learning can lead students to drop out of school altogether. In Sierra Leone in the aftermath of Ebola, 17 percent of girls never re-enrolled once schools reopened, turning a short-term shock into a permanent one.

Much shorter school closures in the past have been shown to reduce children's learning. In the United States, poorer students tend to slip back each summer when schools close for a couple months. In northern Pakistan, four years after a 2005 earthquake led to temporary school closures, students were one and a half years behind their peers.

Using the relationship between schooling and earnings as a guide, researchers estimate that the COVID-19 school closures thus far could result in \$17 trillion in lost lifetime earnings. Further closures in 2022 would increase this figure.

The top priority must be to keep schools open. The cost of school closures is unacceptably high, and it is likely to be much longer-lasting than the cost of shutdowns in other sectors of the economy.

The evidence suggests that COVID-19 mitigation measures — including wearing quality masks, vaccinating teachers and



Join Us in Our New
Telegram Channel

<https://t.me/thetimeskuwait>



For the latest news and updates please subscribe to our Telegram channel.

Credible. Insightful.
Accurate.
The right news,
right in time.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Where Is Dubai Leading Us?



CARLO RATTI

Director of the Senseable City Lab at MIT, is Co-Founder of the international design and innovation office Carlo Ratti Associati.

‘Connecting minds, creating the future’, the slogan of World Expo 2020, is everywhere in this city. The ongoing event, which opened a year late in October 2021, is the first of its kind since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Few other places in the world are as future-oriented as Dubai. But what kind of future does Dubai want? The city has established itself as a model for the emerging urban centers of Asia and the Middle East, so its choices today could have far-reaching consequences in the future.

Unlike many of its neighbors, including in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai’s wealth is not built on oil. In fact, only 1 percent of the city’s GDP comes from hydrocarbons. Not long after oil was first discovered in the emirate in the 1960s, its ruler, Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, decided that the emirate’s economy should not rely on it exclusively. Instead, he pushed Dubai to become a center for global business, based on its favorable geographical position and its pro-market orientation. The city’s planners lived by the credo: ‘If you build it, they will come’.

Thanks to this mentality, Dubai has run like a start-up, continuously betting on new technologies and innovations. Prominent leaders are devoted to emerging fields: the young Omar Al Olama is Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence; Mohammad Al Gergawi, the right hand of current ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is both Cabinet Chief of Staff and Minister of the Future.

Gergawi was involved in the construction of Dubai’s Museum of the Future, a building that towers over the city’s main boulevard. An inspiring quote from Al Maktoum is engraved on its metal facade: ‘The future belongs to those who can imagine it, design it, and execute it. It isn’t something you await, but rather create’.

A similar spirit led Dubai to host the World Expo. Delayed by one crisis, the pandemic, the event is focused on solving others, such as climate change. But some contradictions



become apparent. For example, the Expo has a district devoted to sustainability, but the lush, green exposition site was created from 440 hectares of desert through carbon-intensive water desalination. And while much of the infrastructure will remain after the fair, visitors explore the world through national pavilions meant to stand only a few months.

“ An inspiring quote from Al Maktoum is engraved on the metal facade of the Museum of the Future: ‘The future belongs to those who can imagine it, design it, and execute it. It isn’t something you await, but rather create’.

As part of the team that designed the Expo’s Italian Pavilion, I thought a lot about how to manage these contradictions. After considering the context, our team decided that the pavilion would demonstrate the principle of circularity. We created a building in which all the components are either recycled or recyclable. The

shimmering walls are constructed from two million plastic bottles. The floor is made of coffee grounds and orange peels. The roof consists of the hulls of three upside-down boats, which can be flipped over and set to sea after the event. We also chose an environmentally friendly process to cool the building, relying on a ventilation system that circulates air through the

percent of waste is recycled.

Per capita energy consumption is among the world’s highest. The city has discarded the genius loci of Arab low-rise construction, perfected over centuries to mitigate high temperatures, in favor of an international architectural style born in the climes of mid-twentieth century Chicago and New York. Its competing skyscrapers’ unshaded glass walls absorb every ray of the scorching sun. Life inside, therefore, requires significant air conditioning, intensifying energy consumption.

In other words, behind Dubai’s eagerness to build the city of tomorrow looms some of the values of yesterday. While young people around the world are ready to travel by train or bicycle, their Emirati peers seem to aspire to cruise around in bombastic internal-combustion cars, just like last century’s kids.

Yet for an entire region undergoing massive urban growth, Dubai has become the model to emulate. So, where will Dubai lead its followers? If the city can combine its ability to innovate with the imperatives of sustainability, it will do more than ‘connect minds’ and ‘create the future’. It will help to build a more livable one.

permeable walls and cools it through evapotranspiration.

Dubai as a whole faces sustainability challenges. Most trips in the emirate are made by car, on highways like the 16-lane Sheikh Zayed Road. And separate trash and recycling collection is not widespread. According to some estimates, only 20

THE TIMES
KUWAIT'S PREMIER WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE

To receive your
FREE Pdf copy every week
directly to your inbox,
send an email to
subscribethetimes@gmail.com

For latest News Updates please visit
www.timeskuwait.com



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Governing an Ocean of Plastics



RAIMUND BLEISCHWITZ

Raimund Bleischwitz is Scientific Director at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research.

Images of plastic pollution in the ocean and on beaches are now commonplace, and the problem is likely to get worse. Last week, the OECD's first Global Plastics Outlook revealed a dramatic increase in the plastic waste leaked into aquatic environments. That report came only a month after the World Wildlife Fund for Nature released a study that projects a doubling of microplastics in the ocean over the next few decades.

While there are promising innovations that extract plastic from the ocean or intercept it in rivers, these projects will barely make a dent in the amount of plastic pollution in the world's waterways. Even under the most optimistic projections, these technologies will affect only 5-10% of all plastic in the ocean.

More than 1,000 organizations, including businesses and governments, have signed on to a plan for a new, circular economy for plastics. But this kind of voluntary action also is not enough.

The problem requires a new form of global governance to change the entire production and consumption cycle of fossil-based plastics. The fifth meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) offers a unique forum to turn the tide on marine plastics via legally binding mechanisms.

The international community has already shown its ability to act on serious environmental challenges. The landmark

Montreal Protocol of 1987 on substances that deplete the ozone layer managed to phase out the use of chlorofluorocarbons in only a few years. An international treaty on plastic pollution will require a similar transformation in societies' priorities, based on ocean literacy and a new vision for the blue economy.

An effective international agreement on ocean plastic pollution should account for all aspects of plastics production – from manufacturing to disposal, and it must involve governments, the private sector, and the public. Specifically, a new treaty should address six issues.

First, plastic use must be reduced at all points along the supply chain. Food packaging, particularly take-out containers, is a major source of ocean pollution. Eliminating it will require policy support

the marine environment must be regularly assessed and improved. The forthcoming international coral reef symposium in Bremen offers a chance to examine how microplastics and nanoplastics affect these beautiful and valuable ecosystems. While research suggests that corals have some resilience to plastic pollution, they face myriad other threats, including ocean heat waves, changes in oxygen levels, and ultraviolet radiation.

More systematic and regular assessments will be needed to understand the long-term consequences for corals and other ocean life. Experience with climate-change governance suggests that a more agile structure than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is needed to improve response strategies. One option is regular ocean assessments that synthesize findings on key topics and

with environmental, social, and governance reporting standards. Comparable figures on plastic waste could be included in these frameworks.

Fifth, improvements are needed in waste management and circular-economy systems, particularly in key countries like Indonesia and China. Policy options include extended producer responsibility, landfill taxes, deposit-refund, and pay-as-you-throw usage pricing. A treaty also should offer support for coastal communities in their efforts to manage plastic waste. New policies could pilot funding schemes for innovative local businesses and plastic recovery options, including incineration facilities with energy recovery.

Lastly, legal principles governing the ocean as part of humanity's common heritage should be developed, going beyond the current scope of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. These principles would enable the ocean to be turned from a dumping ground into a source of global prosperity. This will require governments and corporations to work together to create mission-oriented policies and roadmaps for a plastic-free ocean.

Meanwhile, the private sector must spearhead the change in unsustainable patterns of plastic-waste production and promote new innovations that can replace plastic or reduce its use. Consumer awareness, based on learning tools such as "reflectories" and curriculum units on marine plastic pollution, will be needed to push these efforts forward.

An international treaty on marine plastic pollution based on ocean literacy, industry transformation, and agreed legal principles would recognize the multiple services provided by the ocean. It is a crucially important step toward a blue new deal that emphasizes equality, democracy, and justice.

“ Food packaging is a major source of ocean pollution. Eliminating it will require policy support and funding for the development of novel biodegradable food containers and stronger efforts to encourage reusable packaging. ”

and funding for the development of novel biodegradable food containers and stronger efforts to encourage reusable packaging.

Second, a new treaty must encourage the growth of the blue economy. Governments should create programs to promote sustainable, ocean-friendly tourism, fishing, marine renewable energies, and other businesses. Policymakers also must invest in urban-waste and wastewater-management infrastructure that includes resource-recovery options.

Third, the impact of plastic pollution on

engage with relevant parties.

This leads to the fourth issue that a new treaty on marine plastic pollution must address: an agreement on legal principles for sustainable ocean governance. Given that plastic pollution has multiple sources, establishing proper accountability is essential. Packaging producers, food retailers, delivery platforms, shipping companies, tourism firms, and others must be part of the discussion about such principles. Companies already disclose relevant data on emissions, in accordance



Plant-based diet increases lifespan

Researchers behind a new study that used a model program to estimate the effect on life-expectancy from a range of dietary changes, say that eating plant-based foods increases lifespan by a decade or longer.

The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Bergen in Norway and using meta-analyses and data from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, found that eating more legumes, whole grains, and nuts, and eating less red meat and less processed meat, increases life expectancy.

The GBD study is conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent population health research organization based at the University of Washington School of Medicine in the United States. The IHME works with over 5,000 collaborators from 154 countries around the world to develop timely, relevant, and scientifically valid evidence that illuminates the state of global health and in each of 204 countries and territories worldwide.

The greatest increase to lifespan was seen in the 20-something age group, with males seeing an average increase of 13 years and females almost 11 years. People in their 60s saw an increase of an average of 8 additional years by making the switch from a modern Western diet to the more-plant based diet.

Results of the new study reiterate and

strengthen previous data showing that more plants and less processed meats can decrease mortality risks and increase lifespans. Findings from the new study are no surprise to nutrition experts who have long advocated that switching to more plant-based foods helps realize beneficial health outcomes.

It has been widely accepted that nutrition has a significant impact on our health at all ages, and dietary habits can have a dramatic effect on whether we develop disease, reverse disease, and our longevity. For example, a study in 2020 demonstrated that a high intake of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and also coffee is associated with a lower all-cause mortality. Whereas, a high intake of red or processed meats was associated with higher all-cause mortality.

As people age, many feel that they deserve to enjoy their golden years and can afford to let down their guard on dietary restrictions and eat anything they want. However, evidence suggests the contrary; to better enjoy healthy golden years, it is more important than ever for them to supply their aging bodies with the right nutrition through lowering processed foods and increasing plant-based foods in their diet.

At the other end of the spectrum, many young people believe that youthful energy they have gives them the resilience to eat processed foods, meat and unhealthy

beverages without restraint. They too are widely off the mark when it comes to nutrition; the brain fog, difficulty concentrating, or an afternoon low that many young people often complain about can be traced to their dietary intake.

Making the change to more nutritious and healthy food choices can often be difficult, whether for the old or the young. Nevertheless, studies have shown that it is never too late or too early for anyone who is motivated to make simple nutritional changes that have powerful and often life-changing effects on both long and short term health.

Understanding the relative health potential of different food groups enables people to make feasible and significant health gains. The online Food4HealthyLife calculator, provided by PLOS Medicine — a nonprofit, Open Access publisher empowering researchers in science technology and medicine — could be a useful tool for clinicians, policy makers, and laypeople to understand the health impact of dietary choices.

Here are a few suggestions to help you make the switch from a traditional Western diet to a more plant-based approach.

Eat real food: Choose foods that come from nature, are fed from nature, and eventually rot, at least 85 percent of the time.

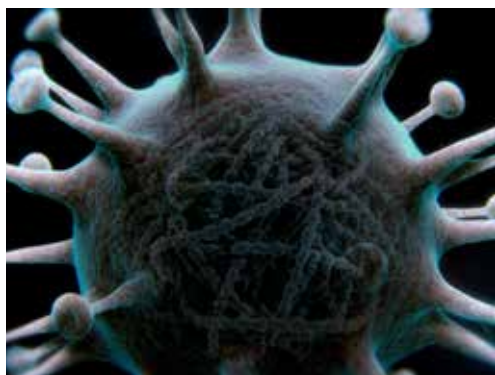
Swap animal for plant protein: Transition



from animal proteins (meat) to plant-based ones. For instance, have a chickpea burger instead of a cheeseburger.

Food color often reflects nutrient density, so aiming for at least five colors every day can help to achieve a diet that is more focused on fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Choose unsaturated oils: Use unsaturated oils that fall in either the monounsaturated or polyunsaturated category. Both kinds of unsaturated fats have been shown to improve blood cholesterol when used in place of saturated and trans fats. Liquid vegetable oils, like soybean, corn, safflower, canola, olive, and sunflower, contain unsaturated fats.



Vaccine for multiple influenza strains

A team of scientists have identified a new weak point in the virus that causes the seasonal influenza illness. The discovery has the potential to bring the quest for an universal vaccine against influenza viruses closer to reality. A multi-virus vaccine could also put an end for people to take vaccinations every year to protect them from variants of the virus that lead to the annual seasonal flu.

Researchers at Scripps Research, University of Chicago and Icahn School of Medicine in the United States found that antibodies produced against a long-ignored section of the virus, which the team dubbed the anchor, have the potential to recognize a broad variety of flu strains, even as the virus mutates from year to year.

Discovering a new site of vulnerability in a virus is always an exciting prospect for the scientific community, as it paves the way to design vaccines that are less affected by viral mutations. The anchor antibodies bind to such a site. Moreover, the antibodies themselves can also be developed as drugs with broad therapeutic applications.

To gain a better understanding of the process, we need to first understand that there are four types of influenza viruses: A, B, C and D. According to the US-based Center for Diseases Control (CDC), human influenza A and B viruses cause seasonal epidemics of disease, often known by the more popular term flu. Influenza C virus infections generally cause mild illness and are not thought to cause human epidemics. Influenza D viruses primarily affect cattle and are not known to infect or cause illness in people. Scientists usually concentrate on the A variety of the influenza virus as it is the only influenza virus known to cause global epidemics of flu disease, or pandemics.

Influenza A viruses are divided into two subtypes based on two proteins — hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA) — present on the surface of the virus. So far, 18 different hemagglutinin subtypes and 11 different neuraminidase subtypes (H1 through H18, and N1 through N11, respectively) have been identified. Current subtypes of influenza A viruses that routinely circulate in people include: A(H1N1) commonly known as 'swine flu' that emerged in 2009, and A(H3N2) that led to multiple outbreaks of a new variety of influenza illness in 2011, and which continues to be detected in people even today. The hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA) proteins present on the influenza virus surface act as antigens. Antigens are molecular structures on the surface of viruses that are recognized by the immune system of the host's body, and which triggers an immune response such as the production of antibodies against the virus.

Vaccines against influenza typically coax the immune system to generate antibodies that recognize the head of hemagglutinin (HA), a protein that extends outward from the surface of the flu virus. The head is the most accessible region of HA, making it a good target for the immune system; unfortunately, it is also one of the most variable. From year to year, the head of HA often mutates, necessitating new vaccines.

Researchers have designed experimental influenza vaccines to be more universal, spurring the body to create antibodies against the less-variable stalk region of HA, which extends like a stem between the influenza virion and the HA head. Some of these universal flu vaccines are currently in early clinical trials.

In the new study, scientists found 358 different antibodies present in the blood of people who had either been given a seasonal influenza vaccine, were in a phase I trial for an experimental, universal influenza vaccine, or had been naturally infected with influenza.

The collection of new antibodies stood out, as they were found to be binding at the very bottom of the stalk, where the HA molecule is attached to the membrane of the flu virion. The scientists named this section of HA the anchor, and began studying it further. In all, the scientists identified 50 different antibodies to the HA anchor, from a total of 21 individuals.

The antibodies, they discovered, recognized a variety of H1 influenza viruses, which account for many seasonal flu strains. More importantly, these antibodies appear to be fairly common in people, and belong to a class of antibodies that any person's body can produce, which is an important consideration in designing a vaccine to spur their development.

Badr Al Samaa Medical Center Presents

Full Body Checkup

Offer valid till 30th June 2022

BEFORE 45 KD

NOW ONLY

15KD

Package Includes

✓ CBC	✓ Creatinine	✓ Urine Routine Analysis
✓ FBS	✓ SGPT	✓ ECG
✓ Urea	✓ SGOT	✓ Chest X-Ray
✓ Uric Acid	✓ Lipid Profile	

FREE GP Doctor Consultation

FREE Followup for 10 Days

FOR ENQUIRIES CALL OR WHATSAPP ON

60689323 60683777 60968777

Farwaniya Block No 4, Street - 39, Near Farwaniya Garden - Kuwait Tel: 24759250/70/80

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Old Man in the White House



Ian Buruma

The author, most recently, of *The Churchill Complex: The Curse of Being Special, From Winston and FDR to Trump and Brexit*.

The world can be thankful that Donald Trump is no longer president of the United States. When he was in office, Trump envied Russian President Vladimir Putin for his brutal authoritarianism, and infamously took the Kremlin strongman's word about election meddling over that of US intelligence agencies. And, having described Putin's tactics vis-à-vis Ukraine as "genius" just hours before Russia launched a massive invasion of the country, Trump had the gall to claim that the attack would not have happened under his watch.

When Putin put Russia's nuclear forces on alert, US President Joe Biden reacted with a necessary and seasoned calm. What a panicked Trump might have done does not bear thinking about.

After Trump used his presidency to undermine America's allies in Europe and East Asia, Biden has managed with great patience and tact to restore unity among them. Even Germany, by finally boosting its defense budget, has done what several US administrations, including Trump's, had sought, and it is now playing a significant role in support of Ukraine (though this may reflect Putin's actions more than anything Biden did).

But according to a recent opinion poll, 62 percent of Americans believe that Russia would not have invaded Ukraine with

Trump in the White House, and 59 percent think that Biden's weakness is to blame for the Russian attack. A separate Fox News poll conducted before the invasion found that, while 81 percent of Republicans have a negative view of Putin, 92 percent of them dislike Biden.

Although opinion polls are not always reliable, these remarkable numbers demand an explanation. On foreign policy (something that does not interest most Americans), Biden cannot win. Many see him either as a weak-kneed appeaser who abandoned Afghanistan, coddles the Europeans, and is soft on Russia, or as a Cold Warrior who provoked the Russian invasion by refusing to accommodate Putin's security concerns.

Biden also has the bad luck of having to deal with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, including high gasoline prices (something that does interest most Americans), surging inflation, and rising street crime. These things are not Biden's fault, but he is stuck with them. As a result, the Democrats could easily lose their slim congressional majority in midterm elections this November.

I think Biden's problem runs deeper, however. This is partly a matter of age. At 79, he is an old man. And not only that, but he is an old white liberal man, who personifies a world crumbling so fast that it almost no longer exists. His is the battered, wrinkled face of Pax Americana, the sometimes benign, sometimes perfidious US hegemony over what used to be called the 'free world'. Safe in the bosom of US military power, West Europeans, as well as Japanese and South Koreans, have enjoyed unprecedented security ever since the

end of World War II. The sun is setting on that US-led world, and not only because everything must end at some point. The rise of rival superpowers is inevitable. Contrary to triumphalist Western claims at the end of the Cold War, history never ends. America's relative decline also has something to do with its tendency toward hubris. Reckless wars, notably in Vietnam and the Middle East, ended in disasters that greatly damaged America's global standing.

Still, external enemies are rarely the only reason why an empire ends, even an informal one like America's. It is more common for the empire to run out of steam. The Indian writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri once ascribed the collapse of the British Raj in India to 'sheer funk'. He was being provocative, of course, but he had a point. When the imperialists stop believing in their own cause, the end is nigh.

Something like that happened in the Soviet Union around 1990, when the leaders of a sclerotic Communist Party lost their desire to prop up a decaying empire. So, it collapsed quickly, and the US and its allies did nothing to soften the humiliation. Putin, who was a KGB officer in East Germany in the late 1980s, has been plotting his revenge ever since.

Things probably will not unravel quite so rapidly in the American case, not least because the US is still a very rich country with a formidable military. But fewer and fewer Americans nowadays feel the need to maintain Pax Americana, which is after all expensive. Republicans in thrall to Trump long to return to the 1930s, when America Firsters promoted US isolation from foreign conflicts and would have been happy to make a deal with Hitler, a leader some of



them rather admired anyway.

Many younger Democrats today are just as unenthusiastic about the US throwing its weight around in the world, regarding this as noxious neo-imperialism. Their main interest instead lies in diversity and inclusivity at home, expressed through causes such as gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and Black Lives Matter. The old guard of Atlanticists, who still believe in a liberal world order led by benevolent men (and a handful of women), are now the last of the Mohicans.

Biden is one of those Mohicans. I am glad he is in charge now, and not an America Firster or a politician entirely focused on domestic social issues. But, once Biden has played his part in this time of crisis, I hope he will swiftly leave the stage with good grace. It is time for a younger Democrat, who is neither an isolationist nor a quasi-imperialist, to seek the presidency. Such a person need not be a woman, a person of color, or gay, but it might help.

المزيني
Al Muzaini



TRANSFER VIA AL MUZAINI APP &

WIN EVERY DAY



MEGA PRIZE

MERCEDES A200 2022

1X DAILY PRIZE

100 KD

2X WEEKLY PRIZES

250 KD

☎ **18 888 18**

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

EXPLORE IT ON
AppGallery

www.muzaini.com