



### DIPLOMAT

The Best Foreign Policy Puts Women at the Center

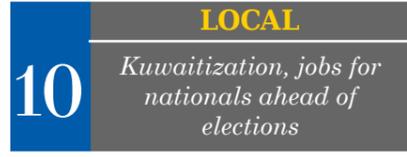
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# Education outcomes not in sync with job market

## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

In late August the Council of Ministers decided to set up a ministerial committee to examine recommendations on the need to diversify educational outputs in line with labor market demands. The committee, to be headed by the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Ali Al-Mudhaf, will examine all aspects pertaining to educational outcomes and methods of syncing them to the job market.

The cabinet's decision to set up the committee follows recommendations by the National Authority for Academic

Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, which found a wide divergence between the outputs of education at secondary and tertiary educational levels and the skill-sets demanded by the labor market. The cabinet committee is also tasked with reviewing and suggesting measures to reform the educational system, raise the efficiency of school curricula and the skills of teachers.

Belated though it be, the acceptance by the Cabinet that the education system needs a major overhaul, and the decision to set up a high-level committee to follow up on this issue, is indeed welcome. The wide disparity between the knowledge and skill-sets demanded by the labor-market, and those available



with young nationals joining the job-market has become increasingly evident with each passing year.

In this regard, a review of educational outcomes at Kuwait University, by the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) showed that in 2016-17 (the latest year for which data were available), despite the university's strategic intentions to enroll more students in subjects that were in demand in the market, the

bulk of first-degree graduations (78%) continued to be in social sciences and humanities, with only 22 percent being in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, which were the proficiencies that employers wanted.

Emergence of the fourth industrial revolution and increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine-learning technologies in many fields will drive the demand for a workforce skilled and knowledgeable in these technologies. The need for Kuwaiti youth to diversify into more innovative IT domains was also driven home recently by the Director-General of the Youth Public Authority (YPA), Dr. Mishaal AlShaheen AlRubaie.

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# VISA



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# Leading Kuwait to a more sustainable future



**Abdullah Alnabhan**

is the Middle East Regional Director/Partner for Palladium, a leading implementer of international development programs that make transformational change possible across regions and countries. With over 20 years of experience in implementing strategic planning and excellence across the world, he has been overseeing all of Palladium's operations in the Middle East. He has also been involved in designing and implementing strategic programs and initiatives across various sectors in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, Kuwait, Egypt, Qatar, Canada, the US, and the UK. He is also a researcher, specialized expert, active writer and speaker in global and regional summits and events tackling the world's most prominent topics, including social development, economic growth, government competitiveness, and impact investments, among other relevant topics.

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In a recent exclusive interview with The Business Year (TBY) Abdullah AlNabhan talks about the impact of increased energy prices in Kuwait and expectations for the upcoming year. He began by narrating his company's experience in this regard in Kuwait. "Over the past few years, we've worked to tackle various challenges in Kuwait. First, we focused on the pandemic and ensuring that both the public and private sector survived its impact. We also dedicated ourselves to creating recovery plans, showing companies and organizations how to return to work safely and make the most of the new, remote working model. And for the past eight months, we've largely focused on growing the renewable energy market and improving social development, agriculture, and health. This is where we see the hope of the future."

Highlighting the changes that have come about following the 2019 Positive Impact Summit that was held in Kuwait, AlNabhan said, "Our mission hasn't changed; the summit theme was "Impact at Scale", with a strong focus on inclusive growth, and we certainly still believe that tackling the environmental crisis is a global issue. It is not up to one country or one sector of the economy to solve this problem, which is why our framework of activity focuses on bringing the private and public sector and communities together to address these challenges. Since then, we have been working on



multiple priorities and helped numerous parties to align their vision with sustainable goals. I think Kuwait can benefit tremendously from these developments and plans. Because it's a relatively small country in size with one of the highest GDP per capita figures in the world, there's room for the government and private sector to implement changes swiftly and effectively. Moreover, growing energy prices offer Kuwait a great increase in expendable income for the coming years."

Offering his suggestions on how such a large oil surplus could be directed and executed, AlNabhan noted: "Of course, the surplus estimates are only based on the current energy prices but given that the bulk of our economy relies on energy sources, this budget could have a great impact on accelerating national diversifica-

tion plans. These funds could be directed towards investments in infrastructure that would make the country more competitive in alternative energy sources, renewable solutions, and innovation. It is a great opportunity that we may not see again for another decade, so it's imperative to leverage it to positively impact the country's ecosystem while we have the means to do so."

Pointing to some areas where Palladium's expertise are currently helping the Kuwaiti market and the MENA region, AlNabhan explained: "No matter where we're working, our goal is to solve the world's most complex challenges. Our business model is focused on creating a positive impact, which is how we measure our success. We usually start with a large-scale program management project, within which we

design frameworks and policy reforms. We start by taking a broad approach and break it down into smaller more actionable pieces and projects.

We are running these projects across the whole region, and across several sectors, including agriculture, social development, and health among others. At the moment, there are over 30 such schemes being realized in the region. So, our work varies dramatically by sector and location. We aren't your typical consultancy firm, but a solutions-oriented expert with a wide range of services."

Elaborating on Palladium's expectations and priorities for 2023, AlNabhan said: "In Kuwait, we will focus heavily on the renewable energy sector, government modernization, and competitive improvement. We anticipate an increase in direct investment in Kuwait, which will expedite the process. I believe this will be a year of particularly significant growth and I hope we can help to make a positive change. In addition, the government will be spending more on various projects to improve the national condition. We intend to be there and available to support both the public and private sector in taking advantage of and making the most of these improvements. Over the coming months, we will be expanding our team to help the State of Kuwait to accelerate toward a better, more sustainable future.

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## KSE provides stock market data online

Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) or Boursa Kuwait as it is officially known, has begun publishing its stock market data and related information online on the digital platform 'Yahoo Finance' and on 'Apple Stocks', thereby providing even more convenience to investors, investment professionals, and other stakeholders. The Apple Stocks app, which derives its information from Yahoo Finance, is the built-in apps found on Apple devices including smartphones, tablets, and computers.

The initiative is a complementary step on the part of KSE to make its data-rich trading platform

with its interactive tools readily available to investors and the general public so as to enable them to make sound investment decisions.

Since early 2021, as part of its digital transformation efforts, KSE has revamped its website to make it more user friendly, and launched a completely new application (Boursa Kuwait) for smartphones, tablets and Apple Watch, with the aim of allowing investors and traders to follow the market at any time and from anywhere.

The KSE website and applications allow stakeholders to view indicators and prices, the financial statements of companies, and follow up on the developments of listed companies and disclosures. The Boursa Kuwait website and application for tablets also provide detailed charts that show the stock price during a specific period of time. Technical indicators are used in these charts to analyze historical data, patterns of price movements and statistical trends from trading activity in order to provide a more comprehensive view. All applications provide the feature of alerts and the creation of follow-up lists.

The KSE comprehensive approach takes into account the diverse needs of its stakeholders and the need for them to be aware of local, regional and international happenings that could impact the business landscape. The Boursa plays a key role in stabilizing the local capital market, and is committed to ensuring that market participants continue to stay informed of the latest developments.



# The best Foreign Policy puts Women at the center

*Greater gender equality leads to greater wealth and security for all...*

By Rachel Vogelstein, Jamille Bigio, and Rebecca Turkington

In 2014, Margot Wallström, then serving as the foreign minister of Sweden, proclaimed that the Swedish government would adopt a so-called feminist foreign policy, becoming the first nation ever to do so. Since then, Canada, France, and Mexico have followed suit, and a handful of other nations—most recently, Luxembourg, Malaysia, and Spain—have pledged to develop similar policies.

In each of these countries, the announcements have provoked questions among foreign policy experts. What, exactly, do these policies set out to achieve? At a time of rising global activism for gender equality, what does it mean to conduct foreign policy from a feminist perspective? And in an era of economic uncertainty, is a focus on gender equality an unnecessary distraction?

Evidence from recent studies suggests that the status of women is closely aligned with a country's prosperity and security. In this respect, promoting gender equality as a foreign policy priority seems like common sense. Closing the gender gap in workforce participation could add as much as \$28 trillion to the global GDP.

Ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace processes makes agreements more likely to last and be implemented. The more women there are in a country's parliament, the lower the incidence of human rights abuses and conflict relapse. Equalizing access to agricultural resources for women could result in 150 million fewer hungry people on the planet. The bottom line: research confirms that nations seeking to fortify their own security, better use foreign aid, or support stable and democratic partners should prioritize women's advancement.

Women's rights have had a place in public policymaking since at least the late 1970s, supported by both international institutions and a proliferation of local ones in more than 100 countries. But national reforms have primarily addressed domestic concerns. A feminist foreign policy offers something different, in that it promotes programs that make gender equality and women's empowerment central to national security, including diplomacy, defense, aid, and trade.



The government of Sweden has undertaken the most comprehensive plan of this type with the feminist foreign policy it first articulated in 2014. But the Swedish policy actually builds on the prior efforts of many other nations. Such efforts share a focus on promulgating change in three broad areas. They seek to promote women's leadership, to commit to policies that advance equality, and to allocate resources in a manner that supports those commitments. The

decision-making circles and placed greater emphasis on gender equality in their conduct of foreign affairs. Today, a record 34 countries have female foreign ministers, 84 have female ministers of trade, and 20 have female ministers of defense. Several countries have established ambassador-level positions to promote women's issues abroad or within their foreign policy apparatus. Not all of these countries have signed on to a foreign policy unequiv-

plans to address women's rights through diplomacy and development cooperation. Eighty-three nations have adopted national action plans to encourage women's participation in peace and security processes. Donor countries, including Australia, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates, have pledged a percentage of their foreign-assistance funds to programs that promote the advancement of women, or they have created new pooled funds to support women's rights organizations. These efforts add up to a collective shift in resources and political will.

The effort to change leadership, adopt policies, and commit resources in order to advance gender equality as a foreign policy priority has met with some skepticism. Critics argue that increasing the focus on women's rights and gender equality detracts from promoting other national interests abroad. Even many who believe that gender equality is a worthwhile goal do not agree that it should be institutionalized as a foreign policy priority.

Such criticism overlooks evidence that gender equality is not only a human right worthy of protection but also a means to advance a country's economic and security interests. Raising the status of women and girls has been shown to increase GDP, improve global health, combat radicalization and extremism, improve the chances of lasting peace, and strengthen democracy. The world confronts too much poverty, insecurity, authoritarianism, and violence for any nation to afford to overlook the talents and contributions of 50 percent of its population.

Other skeptics argue that a true feminist foreign policy would require nothing short of a transformation in international relations. These critics maintain that the feminist policies that the governments of Canada, France, Sweden, and other countries have adopted do not do enough to reshape aid infrastructure, decrease militarism, address the root causes of inequality, or incorporate the experiences of women and girls. But to the extent that such critiques are valid, they risk making the perfect the enemy of the good. Moreover, policies promoting gender equality in the national security space are relatively new, and it is still too early to know just what effects they will have, whether on improving the lives of women or on generating the political will to bring about further change.

“ Women's rights have had a place in public policymaking since at least the late 1970s, supported by both international institutions and a proliferation of local ones in more than 100 countries. But national reforms have primarily addressed domestic concerns. ”

specific initiatives governments have proposed vary, as do the extent of their implementation and the means of measuring their success. And although all aim to elevate gender equality as a foreign policy priority, not all are explicitly termed 'feminist'.

Over the last decade, many countries have brought more women into their foreign policy

cally dedicated to advancing women's rights, but the shifts in their leadership have diversified foreign policy debates and led to effective policies.

Countries with and without explicitly feminist foreign policy agendas have pursued policies and dedicated resources that further gender equality, some of them adopting specific

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# Challenges facing global economy

Reconnaissance Research explores the challenges facing the global economy, with **Dr. Hani K. Findakly**, who serves on several corporate boards, including the Clinton Group, Inc. (NY) and Sedco Capital (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia). He is also on the US Department of State Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy; International Board, Peking University



and a trustee of Sichuan University in China. He received his PhD and MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Here, Dr. Findakly explains the impact on global trade from short term shocks, such as COVID-19 and Russia's war in the Ukraine, as well as the long-term imbalances of US excessive debt and a major shift in US-China relations.



**The World Economy:** The world economy faces multiple problems that are the most challenging in decades. They are challenging because they have no easy solutions. Not only is global policy coordination now difficult because of fractious geopolitics, it is more difficult because the problems of one country differ from another, and the solutions for different countries may in some cases increase the problem for others.

The forces that have propelled economic growth in the past few decades are now absent, replaced by geopolitical conflicts, lackluster policy decisions, frustrated economic remedies, and uncertainty that delay investment decisions and increase global financial instability.

Against this backdrop are four distinct forces that have brought the world economy to its present stage.

**China:** China's growth, which lifted 800 million people out of poverty in the past three decades, nearly 75 percent of global poverty in the past three decades, helped raise global growth at an unprecedented pace in history.

Moreover, by training 600 million rural workers (nearly 19% of the entire global workforce) in manufacturing, China transformed global manufacturing into a more efficient, productive, and lower cost industry. In the process, these low-paid, highly trained workers substantially increased corporate profits and growth for Western companies that outsourced production to China.

By benefitting from this China-driven non-inflationary growth, the world economy, particularly the US, enjoyed low interest rates, while subsidizing consumption, borrowing, and printing money without suffering the cost of such profligacy.

Meanwhile, China, which has benefited from cheap Russian energy and over \$100 billion in Russian investments seeking shelter from US sanctions, has some scope for stabilizing its economy at a lower growth rate, but will have a limited impact in the absence of global growth. Meanwhile, as the largest creditor to developing countries faces the potential for debt default by these countries that will limit its capacity to extend more assistance to them.

The US: From August 2008 to August 2022, the US Federal Reserve increased its balance sheet from \$900 billion to \$8.9 trillion in 'printed money', of which \$5.2 trillion was added in only 3 years.

Having registered two consecutive negative quarterly growth this year, the US is teetering on the edge of recession, while the confluence of Covid-related supply chain disruptions and the rising cost of energy and food emanating from the Ukraine conflict, with the forces of excessive public spending and loose money have raised inflation to a 40-years high. A remedy for taming inflation will necessarily involve higher interest rates and reduced spending, hence slower growth. Beyond that, the seemingly irreversible breach in US-China political and economic relationship not only clouds the outlook for the future but makes coordination on a wide range of issues from trade to climate change nearly impossible. Finally, the prospects for the US economy are unfavorable for the near term because:

The Fed's policy of quantitative easing of zero interest rates which has pumped \$95 billion of cash per month into the economy is over as the Fed will start draining money instead and raise interest rates.

The dysfunctional political system creates uncertainty

that will constrain business planning and investments.

Rising housing prices and higher mortgage rates have reduced housing affordability to most buyers.

Rising cost of capital to start-up and unprofitable companies will knock down the prices of speculative stocks and bring down the broad market indices.

Lower growth prospects, chronic dual fiscal and trade deficits, coupled with the US penchant for application of economic sanctions could accelerate the trend of diversification away from the Dollar.

Collectively, these issues signal ominous systemic problems that can impact the global economy for the foreseeable future. For emerging countries, high energy, and food prices, along with higher cost of debt could lead to social and political stress. The recent crisis in Sri Lanka may be replicated elsewhere with increasing frequency. For Europe, the energy crisis has impacted growth as policy makers attempt to find a sweet spot between fighting inflation and stimulating the economy, likely through currency devaluation as the Euro reached parity against the Dollar. Similarly, the UK faces even a larger problem as its struggles with the self-inflicted Brexit consequences, while Italy struggles to even have a government.

**The GCC:** For the GCC countries, the prospects are mixed overall. In the near term, the outlook is generally positive but uncertain in the longer term. Higher revenues will be partially offset by higher import prices and declining value of international investments. It will not be surprising that some of the GCC countries could face overall deficits. Properly directed, the higher revenues will support growth. In the longer term, persistently high oil prices will slow down demand and accelerate the shift to renewables. More importantly, should the influx of money from higher oil prices persist, it will drive a massive transfer of \$1-\$2 trillion of wealth from oil consuming countries to GCC producers, eliciting a potentially adverse response. Also, the GCC needs to steer a delicate course in the US-China dispute and take a position of tactical ambiguity that serves its interests.

**Conclusion:** a higher prospect for stagflation. Caution should be the order of the day.



**W**orld Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) 2022, the global health initiative by the Qatar Foundation that has become a major biennial fixture on global healthcare calendar, is slated to take place this year on 4 - 6 October in Doha, Qatar. In view of the summit taking place in the run up to FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, a significant focus of the health gathering will be exploring the potential health legacy of the tournament.

Other key areas of attention during this year's sixth edition of WISH Summit are post-COVID-19 legacy, disability and accessibility, and wellbeing, as well as persistent health issues such as antimicrobial resistance and healthcare in conflict zones, and the mental and physical health of healthcare professionals. This year's summit will tackle a diverse yet timely and critical set of topics at dedicated sessions.

## Healing the Future, theme for upcoming WISH 2022 summit

A commitment to sustainability and inclusivity underpins WISH 2022. The summit - being held under the theme of Healing The Future - will lead by example in promoting solutions to global health challenges, which aim to create greener practices within the

healthcare industry and to make care services accessible to people of all abilities.

Aside from healthcare experts and industry leaders like Prof. Dame Sarah Gilbert, developer of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, and Dr. Richard Hatchett, CEO of

the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, several health ministers, elite sportspeople as well as renowned artists, like the Columbian contemporary fine artist Dairo Vargas, will be participating at the summit. Art in the form of live painting and photographic exhibitions will form the core of several critical discussions on such topics as mental health and wellbeing, and destigmatizing disability in the Arab world.

Also back this year are the popular WISH Agora sessions, which aim to recreate the inclusive and interactive atmosphere of ancient Greek assemblies that existed as platforms for frank and open conversations. At WISH 2022, the Agoras will explore topics such as workplace stress, safeguarding mental health of medical students, and how to keep health systems ready for future emergencies.

# PAM urged to expedite domestic worker recruitment files

Ambassadors of Nepal, H.E. Durga Prasad Bhandari, and of Tanzania, H.E. Saeed Musa, paid a courtesy call on the Director of Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) Dr. Mubarak Al-Azmi.

During the visit, the envoys are reported to have discussed with Dr. Al-Azmi mechanisms for enhancing cooperation in the field of recruitment and employment especially of domestic workers. This comes in light of the fact that the authority has not taken any positive step beyond the stage of holding meetings to sign a memorandum of understanding with these countries. Pushing the file forward is expected to

ameliorate the severe shortage in domestic workers that the market has been suffering from since 2020.

Owner of one domestic worker recruitment agency, Al-Shammari said, "Kuwait has relied for years on a few countries for domestic workers, and one of these countries provides us with about 60 percent of the labor market's needs, which raises the alarm bells in the event of any problems with this country, as happened during the past years." He noted that the memorandum of understanding that PAM announced signing with Ethiopia, to bring in domestic workers from that country,



remains suspended so far, despite being in the final stages, and a real desire from Addis Ababa to complete it and start the process of recruitment and deployment.

Al-Shammari expected a strong resurgence of the domestic labor shortage crisis in the coming months, due to the many current problems, including the reluctance of workers to come to Kuwait, as well as the imminent announcement of a neighboring country to lift the ban on recruitment from the Philippines, which he said is the "backbone" to provide us with new employment. He called on PAM to solve the problem quickly and expedite the process of signing memoranda of understanding with the domestic workers exporting countries and not to be satisfied with one or two countries.



## IWG starts off new season in style

International Women's Group (IWG) opened its new season for the year 2022-2023 on 11 September at the Al-Thuraya Ballroom in Crowne Plaza Hotel attended by the group's board and its members

The meeting began with Laila Boulos, the public relations coordinator, asking attendees to stand for a moment of silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Britain.

This was followed by a speech by Ghada Shawky, the incoming President of the IWG,

and spouse of the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

In her opening remarks Mrs. Shawky thanked IWG's Honorary President, Sheikha Hanouf Al Sabah, for her much appreciated support and also expressed her gratitude to the outgoing President Cristiana Balducci, spouse of the Ambassador of Italy. In welcoming members and guests Mrs. Shawky said that she was honored to be the new President of IWG and pledged to continue to build on the long history of cultural exchanges of the group. She added, "One of the many things that multiculturalism is defined by is respecting, acknowledging and valuing different cultures. This is at the very heart of both this organization and the Diplomatic Corps that we are a part of: honoring our countries while fostering international links that emphasize peace and unity".

The president's speech was followed by a number of musical pieces performed by the talented Lebanese violinist Samira Riachy, who excelled in playing her instrument and won the admiration of the attendees. A display of pictures of meetings and activities carried out by the group in previous years was then held. A quick quiz was held for the attendees, which included questions related to the work and activities of the International Women's Group.



## PAY launches courses to develop youth skills

Human resources development is a key priority for the government in order to achieve its ambitious 2035 New Kuwait vision. In line with this, the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) last week announced the launch of more than 30 development courses to enhance youth skills.

The courses, which are in six different areas of skills development, are being made available through the 'Imkan' online platform to develop their skills, build their capabilities, and enhance their economic and social contribution.

A statement from PAY noted that these courses will be held online and will be free and include the areas of leadership, self-development, science and technology, culture, literature and various hobbies with the aim of developing young people's skills in the field of entrepreneurship. The authority urged Kuwaiti youth of both genders to register for these courses through the official PAY website.

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# Acclaimed Indian surgeon attends KMA-IDF oration in Kuwait



World-renowned Indian cardiovascular and cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Naresh Trehan, gave the keynote address at the 8th Oration program jointly organized by the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF) and Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) that was held at the Regency Hotel on 12 September.

The chief guest on the occasion, the Indian Ambassador H.E. Sibi George inaugurated the event, while the Chief of Medical Services in Armed Forces Hospital Sheikh Abdulla Meshal Mubarak Al Sabah, who was the guest of honor, delivered a felicitation address in which he expressed looking forward to greater cooperation between Kuwait and India in the field of medical science. KMA President Dr. Ibrahim Al Towala then presented a memento on behalf of the Kuwait Medical Association to Dr. Naresh Trehan. The event was also attended by IDF President Dr. Amir Ahmad, Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Leena Marianna and several senior officials from the Ministry of Health and other private hospitals in Kuwait.

KMA IDF Oration award memento was presented by the Indian Ambassador while Sheikh Meshal Al Sabah presented a shawl to the visiting dignitary.

In his keynote address at the KMA-IDF Oration, Dr. Trehan highlighted the medical capabilities and facilities that are available in India. "In India today, we are conducting all advanced medical treatments at very competitive costs relative to other countries offering similar medical procedures. Today, patients from more than 80 countries

are visiting India to get treatment," said Dr. Trehan, who is also the founder and chairman of the sprawling Medanta-The Medicity, one of India's top-most multi-specialty medical institutes.

Having all medical facilities comparable to the Mayo and Harvard clinics in the United States, Medanta is equipped with the latest technology, eminent national and internationally reputed faculty and treatment facilities at an affordable cost. The hospital ranks among the top 100 hospitals

worldwide, and it has been nominated as the best private hospital in 28 countries by The Newsweek magazine.

"There is a good movement in India to make it a global medical destination, and with the latest advanced robotic surgeries and treatments available in India we offer the best medical treatment at a fraction of the cost charged for comparable treatments in Western countries. Also, on the training side, we have excellent facilities, and more than 36 countries are today sending their doctors to our facilities in India," said Dr. Trehan.

Having performed over 50,000 open-heart surgeries, Dr. Trehan has a global reputation and a rich professional experience of over 41 years in his field of specialization.

During his visit, Dr. Trehan also held a lecture at the Specialized Chest Hospital on 'Surgical Management of Heart Failure — assisted devices and management of complications', and at the Faculty of Medicine he spoke on 'New Frontiers in Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery'. The sessions were attended by a large number of Kuwaiti medical specialists.



## LuLu Hypermarket holds 'PonnOnam 2022' promotion



LuLu Hypermarket, the retail leader in the region, celebrated a week-long 'PonnOnam 2022' promotion that ran from 6 to 13 September at all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait.

The PonnOnam 2022 promotion was inaugurated at the Al Rai outlet of the hypermarket on 10 September by top management of LuLu Kuwait along with Al Rai branch members, and in the presence of a large gathering of shoppers, well wishers and media personnel.

Onam, a ten-day long cultural extravaganza, is one of the main festivals of the southern Indian state of Kerala. It is often known as 'PonnOnam' or 'Golden Onam' in reference to the bountiful harvest that traditionally takes place in this season. Along with colorful competitions and captivating programs that attracted customers, the week-long promotion also featured amazing discounts and special offers on a wide range of products, including one-off prices on all Indian fresh vegetables, fruits and other food stuff.

Additionally, a delightful array of over 22 dishes were available as part of the main 'Onam

sadiya' menu, including more than 11 varieties of irresistible 'payasams' (sweet porridges) at very special prices. An alluring mix of Onam flowers, imported specifically for the occasion, also added to the color and fragrance of the festival.

The traditional Onam practice of buying and gifting new clothes to family members on the main day of Onam festival, was promoted at LuLu Hypermarket with very special offers on a range of branded clothing outfits, as well as stylish sarees, churidars and menswear that were available at never-before discounted prices. Curated ethnic wear 'dhawanis' were also offered exclusively through LuLu outlets on the occasion.

Garment shoppers were also offered a KD5 free LuLu Shopping Voucher on every purchase they made worth KD10, from 25 August to 11 September. Additionally, every KD10 worth of purchase was rewarded with a KD2.5 free LuLu Shopping Voucher for spending on fashion, footwear, ladies bags, or baby accessories from 17 August to 11 September.

Underscoring the cultural aspects of the Onam festival, there were a slew of programs arranged to engage shoppers throughout the 'PonnOnam' promotion period. These included a variety of cultural programs at the Al Rai outlet on 8 September that was accentuated with the distinctive 'chenda melam' performance on traditional drums to welcome 'Maveli', the festival's mascot. Meanwhile, a traditional 'pulikali' or 'tiger-dance' was arranged at the Al Rai, Al Dajeej and Fahaheel branches of the hypermarket.

A dazzling fashion show of kids in traditional Onam outfits was also held on 8 September at the Al Rai branch, with the first prize winner receiving a KD50 gift voucher. The second prize winner received a KD40 gift voucher, while the third prize winner received a KD30 gift voucher, in addition to consolation prizes being presented to all participants.

Adding to the festivities, on 9 September there was a spirited 'vadamvali' (tug of war) competition between 10 teams of 7 members each. The winning team was presented with a

gift voucher worth KD250, while the second and third placed teams received KD150 and KD100 worth of gift vouchers respectively.

On 10 September, the Al Rai store also witnessed an attractive 'pookalam' (floral carpet design) competition, which displayed the talents of competing teams in arranging flowers in various artistic designs. The winning team was presented with a gift voucher for KD100, while the second place winners received a gift voucher worth KD75 and the third place winner was awarded a gift voucher worth KD50. Consolation prizes were also presented to all the participants.

Also, on the same day and venue, a 'payasa mela' (payasam cooking) competition was held to demonstrate the payasam cooking capabilities of competitors, with the first prize being a KD75 gift voucher. The second prize was KD50 worth of gift voucher, and KD30 gift voucher went as the third prize, along with consolation prizes granted to all participants.

LuLu PonnOnam 2022 promotion was supported and sponsored by Al Wazzan, Bayara, Eastern and Haribo food product brands.

# Million square meter amusement park at Al-Wafra

Decision by the Council of Ministers to establish a one-million square meter amusement park in Al-Wafra area has won acclaim from the public in a country that has not witnessed any major initiatives in tourism infrastructure development for ages.

In what is being billed as the largest recreational park in the country, the Al-Wafra amusement park is expected to provide a wide range of entertainment and gaming facilities for the public, including recreational centers, sports activities, restaurants, restrooms, and an animal and fish reproduction area.

Authorities are said to be keen to speed up the completion of the project as it would serve not only as a recreational outlet for families, but also help in the comprehensive development of the area. At present, Al-Wafra is largely an agricultural area with a few residential areas. People in the area are pinning their hopes on the new government to see the project through without delay or disruptions, unlike in the past.

There was no dearth of suggestions on what the government should do to further develop the area. A farm owner in Wafra believes that parks are useful for citizens, and that they will reap good financial returns for the country if it is turned into an integrated service area that serves all people of the governorate. Meanwhile, another citizen demanded the immediate completion of the park, along with an integrated zoo, as well as the construction of large commercial complexes and markets to meet all the needs of the region's residents. Other countries have already established such vital projects, and within a relatively short period of time, said one citizen, adding that the project is vital in serving Kuwait as a whole. He is hoping that such a project, along with other

developmental projects, will also be completed in the Abdali farms in the northern region of the country. Another resident of the area said that the project will be one of the vital areas in Kuwait that provides food security from vegetables, meat, animal and poultry products. He hoped that on completion of the project, existing stores will be distributed to the citizens who can use it to provide innovative services to visitors and thereby further benefit from the developments in the area.

People also called for developing other projects next to the park, such as an entertainment city, as Wafra constitutes a large segment of citizens. While previously it was predominantly a farming area, now the situation has changed as Al-Wafra is in close proximity to five residential areas. Residents here

would also like the construction of a vegetable market, as well as other diversified economic, tourism, recreational and agricultural development projects in the area,

Several citizens hoped the project would lead to more attention being given to Wafra, especially on cleanliness, and for the Ministry of Works to amend dilapidated roads and maintain them well. They are asking the Ministry of Interior to provide sufficient patrols, especially in the evening, to maintain security and prevent quarrels, thefts and other security problems.

A recreational park in Al-Wafra appears at least on paper to be a good development project. During springtime, expats, members of diplomatic corps and several communities visit Al Wafra to witness the agricultural abun-



dance and make purchases of greenery, particularly given the cheap prices of seedlings, palm trees and other crops and plants. Many citizens have also made parks in their own farms and paid huge sums of money to develop them, but during feasts and official holidays, these parks cannot cope with the rush of people and meet the needs of visitors.

## Indian Embassy to hold record-breaking event 'Namaste Kuwait'

Embassy of India, in association with Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) is organizing 'Namaste Kuwait' to celebrate 75 Years of India's independence- 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' on Friday, 23 September 2022 from 8am to 8pm at the Embassy premises, Daeya Diplomatic enclave.

The event under the theme - '75 Art forms- 750 minutes - More than 750 artists' will feature 75 art forms of India performed by more than 750 artists continuously without a break for 750 minutes. Diverse art forms from all over India will be showcased during the event to illustrate the rich Indian heritage and commemorate the glorious past 75 years of independent India.

All are invited to the event being held at the embassy auditorium



from 8am to 8pm. The event will be held in hybrid mode- virtual and offline. Links for the live streaming of the event will be shared on Embassy's official social media handles. Due to the limited seating available, entry for the offline event will be on a first-come-first-entry basis. Civil ID will be mandatory to attend the offline event at the Embassy's auditorium.

## Tanzanian Ambassador meets LuLu Management to strengthen bilateral trade



Tanzania Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Mr.Said Shaib Mussa paid a visit to the regional head-office of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait on 13 September. The ambassador was received on arrival by top management of the hypermarket.

During the visit Ambassador held talks with the hypermarket's top-level management that centered around further enhancing imports of fresh produce items from Tanzania.

In the course of discussions, the Tanzania Ambassador underlined the strong bilateral relations between Tanzania and Kuwait and plans to further strengthen these ties,

including by focusing more in the areas of fresh Fruits & vegetables, where retailers like LuLu Hypermarket have a major role to play.

For their part, the LuLu officials expressed their utmost satisfaction with the products sourced from Tanzania. Pointing out that the hypermarket already imports fresh meat from Tanzania, the officials added that they planned to import even more products in the future. The talks also revealed that the hypermarket is preparing to hold a major Tanzania products promotion in the upcoming months, to showcase the wide variety of Tanzania fresh produce items available on the hypermarket's shelves.



## Luncheon reception held for eminent Indian surgeon

A luncheon reception was held in honor of visiting Indian cardiovascular and cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Naresh Trehan at Mais Alghanim restaurant last week.

The host, Saulat Khan, a prominent Indian businessman hosted the reception to welcome Dr. Trehan during his first visit to Kuwait.

Dr. Trehan is the founder-chairman of the mega Medanta -The Medicity, one of the top-most multi-specialty medical institutes in India. The reception saw the attendance of the dean of Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador of Tajikistan, as well as the Ambassadors of Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.



# Kuwait tops in broadband efficiency ranking

The latest broadband efficiency index published by the United Kingdom based Cable Company ranks Kuwait first in the Arab world and 82 globally in terms of median internet speed. The median internet speed is measured by downloading a typical high-definition movie of 5GB, with 'Cable' conducting more than 1 billion tests in 220 countries to draw up the index. The median global internet speed in 2022 was found to be 34.79 Mbps, up from 29.79 Mbps in 2021.

Among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Qatar retained the second place in the Arab world, but recorded a decline from 78th to 95th globally; the UAE abandoned

the regional leadership and also fell to 100th place in the global ranking after it was 73rd last year. Saudi Arabia retained the fourth Arab position, with a partial decline from 99th to 101st globally, followed by Bahrain, which also fell from 104th to 111th position. The fall in global ranking of some countries came despite relative increases in their internet speed.

Of the 19 Arab countries featured in this year's index, Lebanon continued its decline to reach 193 globally and 16 at Arab level. Sudan, Syria and Yemen fared even worse in internet speed.

Syria ranked 205 globally, with an average speed of 2.88 megabytes per

second, followed by Sudan in 209 globally, with an average speed of 2.57 megabytes per second, and finally Yemen ranked 218 globally, with an average speed of 0.97 megabytes per second.

Globally, Macau recorded a significant increase in internet speed to occupy the first place in the world with an average internet speed of 262.74 megabytes per second, followed by Jersey with an average internet speed of 256.59 megabytes per second, and Iceland in third place in the world with an average internet speed of 216.56 megabytes per second. In fourth spot was Liechtenstein with an average internet speed of 66.22 megabytes per



second, while Gibraltar ranked fifth in the world, with an average internet speed of 159.90 megabytes per second.

## ICS presents 'Deedar', Live concert by Nooran sisters

Soulful and rocking performers, and Saward-winning playback singers Jyoti and Sultana Nooran are to enthrall audiences with their live concert on 30 September at the American International School auditorium in Maidan Hawally from 7pm.

The Nooran sisters come from a family of musicians. Ustad Gulshan Mir, the grandson of Bibi Nooran and son of Swarn Nooran, a Sufi singer in the 1970s, began training the sisters when they were very young. They have been trained in the field of traditional 'Sufi Music' as well as Punjabi and Hindi folk songs.

The duo's song 'Allah Hoo', which was a sensation on YouTube digital platform, as well as other songs such as 'Mae Yaar Da Diwana' and 'Patakha Guddi', helped propel the popularity of the sisters, both online and on stage.

The Nooran sisters received their first break in Bollywood in 2014 with the playback singing of 'Patakha Guddi' in the movie 'Highway' under music director A.R. Rahman. Since then they have rendered playback singing in numerous films from Singh

is Bliin in 2015 to their latest song in the 2021 movie Qismat 2.

The exceptional talent of the Nooran sisters has gained audiences worldwide and won them international recognition including at the Gima Awards, Screen Awards, Mirchi Music Awards, Coke Studio at MTV, Mirchi music Award Punjabi (Female Voice of the Year-Jinde Meriye and others. Nooran sisters have also recorded several music albums and songs, including Allah Hoo, Deedar, Aae Khuda, Nitt Khair Mange, Dastoor, Sawan, Rooh, Masti and others.

Indian Cultural Society, a pioneer for organizing quality entertainments events in Kuwait since 2015, They have earmarked the years 2021 and 2022 to lend support to Indian networks and link back to rich Indian culture and heritage by promoting exclusively Indian events such as plays, music, art, and classical performances.

For details on reserving seats contact: ics.kuwait@gmail.com or call What'sApp: 99709495, 97653441, 66550065 & 97690035 www.icskuwait.org

## MoH inaugurates Abu Fatira Health Center



Minister of Health Dr. Khaled Al-Saeed, inaugurated last week the AbuFatira Health Center to serve the roughly 12,000 residents in the area and its immediate surroundings. The opening of the new center brings the total number of health centers in the Ahmadi medical area to 32, including 13 centers that are open 24 hours a day, and four specialized centers at Fahaheel, Al-Adan Fintas, and Sabah Al-Ahmad.

In a statement issued on the occasion, the health minister noted that the center is built on an area of about 5,000 square meters, and consists of two floors. He reiterated his vision that the expansion of primary health care services, and the improvement of their quality, has a significant positive impact on the health sector.

For his part, the Director of Al-Ahmadi Health District, Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, said that the center will initially operate from seven in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon, from Sunday to Thursday. The center will provide services that include diabetes clinic, chronic disease clinic, and general medicine clinics, and these services will be increased gradually as working hours in the center are extended.

He added that the center is equipped with all basic medical services, including a pharmacy, nurses and doctors, while pointing out that the building simulates the



new models in primary health care centers, which take into account both immediate and future needs. The center also includes a second floor for dental services, laboratories, maternity and childhood clinics, and some other specialties that will be made operational soon.

He also mentioned that obtaining services at the health center will take only a maximum of 7 to 10 minutes, in addition to making treatment available to everyone, and the quality of the service will be exceptional, noting that the introduction of the electronic file is considered a quantum leap.

Meanwhile, the official spokesman for the ministry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, said that the interest in expanding the opening of health centers comes from the ministry's belief in the importance of these centers, and the health services they provide, as well as an actual translation of the country's development plan, which stems from the vision of New Kuwait 2035. The purpose is to achieve one of its important pillars, which is to provide high quality health services.

Al-Saeed added that in coming days other centers, including Sabah Al-Ahmad City Health Center, and the Al-Wafra Specialized Medical Center will be opened to the public, in addition to the Fahaheel Health Center, which is currently under restoration.

## Budget surplus in August sets record

Kuwait's recorded budget in the month of August amounted to about KD 2.6 billion, excluding non-oil revenues, comprising the largest flows of oil sales since the beginning of the current fiscal year.

Last month, the general budget recorded a monthly surplus of approximately KD 600 million, after paying all the entitlements for the month, which amounted to approximately KD1.9 billion, including traditional expenses of 1.6 billion, and an additional KD30 million to pay arrears for the last fiscal year.

The volume of liquidity in the General Reserve Fund has recently reached over KD3.2 billion, noting that after regular payment of arrears since the beginning of the year the remaining deficit for the last fiscal year is approximately KD1.8 billion. It was also confirmed that the levels of liquidity are variable, not fixed but increasing and decreasing, according to the due payments and the flows of oil revenues. However, based on the numbers recorded, it is likely that the deficit achieved for the last fiscal year will be fully addressed by the end of the fiscal year on 31 March.

Meanwhile, Kuwait continued to raise its oil production levels by 37,000 barrels per day last August to reach the level of 2.8 million barrels per day, according to data from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries



(OPEC). Kuwait informed the organization that it raised production levels during the month of August last by 43 thousand barrels to reach 2.8 million barrels.

The increase in Kuwait's oil production comes in implementation of the decision of the 'OPEC +' alliance, and in total, the production levels of the 'OPEC' countries increased by about 618,000 barrels per day to reach 29.65 million barrels per day during August, compared to production of 29 million barrels per day during July.

As for the average price of a Kuwaiti barrel of oil since the beginning of the year, OPEC said that it amounted to \$106.24 per barrel during 2022, compared to the average price of a Kuwaiti barrel during 2021, which amounted to \$66.40 per barrel. On the other hand, a barrel of Kuwaiti oil witnessed a decrease during the month of August to reach \$103.8 compared to a price of \$109.2 per barrel during July.

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# GCC employers plan to go on hiring spree in 2023

A new Middle East Job Index survey on hiring trends and job availability in the region reveals that employers are looking to go on a hiring spree in 2023. The poll conducted by Bayt.com, one of the leading job sites in the region, and market research agency, YouGov shows that 66 percent of employers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are to hire new workers in the coming year.

With the skills sets and qualifications needed to cater to this employment demand still in short supply, employers will increasingly have to look further than the borders of the respective GCC states. Among the jobs that are likely to be in demand in the short term over the next three months are that of accountants (18%), sales managers (16%) and administrative assistants (16%). Interestingly, good communication skills in Arabic and

English (67%) emerged as the top skill that employers look for in a candidate. Being a team player (38%) and good leadership skills (35%) follow.

In terms of experience, 34 percent of survey respondents stated that they were looking for candidates with managerial experience, while 29 percent were searching for those with sales and marketing experience, and another 29 percent wanted candidates with mid-level experience.

Further, Engineering (25%), Business Management (24%) and Commerce (20%) are the most sought-after academic qualifications among employers in the GCC. Ola Haddad, Director of Human Resources at Bayt.com said: "A large majority of MENA employers are looking to expand their workforce through a human-led approach. While professionals need to focus on honing skills in demand such as communication and

collaboration, companies need to provide access routes for those who lack skills, take steps to strengthen the capabilities of skilled employees, and commit to constant upskilling."

Overall, Business Consultancy/ Business Management/ Management Consulting (84%) emerged as the top industry claiming to hire the most in the next one year across the MENA region. This is followed by Commerce/ Trade/ Retail (82%) and Consumer Goods/ FMCG (81%). Meanwhile, industries attracting and seeking to retain top talent included Banking/ Finance (29%), Advertising/ Marketing/ Public Relations (28%) and Real Estate/ Construction/ Property Development (27%).

Zafar Shah, Research Director at YouGov said: "There is a tremendous need for skilled workers in the private sector, as multinational companies continue to



demonstrate a higher probability for hiring in the MENA region. At the same time, employers are looking for skills such as communication, teamwork and ability to work under pressure in order to build the teams needed to successfully deal with the challenges and opportunities of today and those yet to come."

## Maurya Kala Parisar to hold Dinkar Hindi Awards

**Maurya Kala Parisar, Kuwait**  
INVITES ENTRIES FROM INDIAN SCHOOLS

FOR  
**7<sup>TH</sup> Dinkar Hindi Awards**  
Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
1 PM to 6 PM at Aspire Indian International School

**Hindi Debate Class IX TO XI**    **Self Written Hindi Poetry Class IX TO XI**    **Hindi Poetry Recitation Class VI TO VII**  
**One Hindi Achiever from Each School**

Poets of recent period (year 2000 onwards) should be selected for recitation. Entry only through Schools.  
4 entry per category and one Hindi Achiever per school. Last date for entry 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022. Submit by email to [Mauryakala@gmail.com](mailto:Mauryakala@gmail.com). Contact for clarification: 97235707 / 66443900

Maurya Kala Parisar (MKP), a cultural and social association of people in Kuwait connected to the Indian states of Bihar and Jharkhand, is to hold the seventh edition of Dinkar Hindi Awards at the Aspire Indian International School, Street 100 Block 1 Abbasiya School Complex on Friday, 7 October from 1pm to 6pm.

The Dinkar Awards, which are being held after a lapse of two years, will feature competitions in Hindi poetry and debate in three separate categories. Additionally, one Hindi Achiever nominated by each school will be awarded a Hindi Achiever Award.

The Parishad has requested schools to send in entries for participants in each of the categories for the poetry and debate competitions, as well as nominate one student to receive the Hindi Achiever Award. For the debate competition, schools should submit participants in pairs (one for the topic and one against the topic.) and a maximum of two pairs. Topic for debate will be mailed to the schools with invitation and will also be provided to the participants on submission of entries.

Tentative schedule for the competitions to be held at the Aspire Indian International School are as follows:

**Competition 1:** Hindi Debate: Class IX to XI: Time: 1pm to 2.30pm

Each contestant will be given 2 minutes for speaking and one minute for rebuttal.

**Competition 2:** Original poetry in Hindi by

students: Class IX to XI: Time: 2.15pm to 3.30pm  
Maximum 4 entries

Poetry should be written by the student and submitted along with the entry. (A handwritten image of the poem can be submitted by mobile messaging. Poetry to be recited on the date of the competition in maximum 3 minutes.

**Competition 3:** Recitation of Hindi poetry of poets from 21st Century (Year 2000 onward) by students: Class VI to VIII: Time 3.15pm to 5.15pm  
Maximum 4 entries.

Name of the poem and poet should be submitted with entry and the poem should be rendered in maximum 3 minutes.

**Hindi Achiever:** Schools should select students with highest marks in Class 10 in 2022. In case of equal marks, previous school examination marks are to be considered. School decision will be final. Prize Distribution: 5.15pm to 6pm.

Entries with name, class, school, contact number, email and a teacher's name and contact number for coordination should be submitted latest by 3 October by email to [mauryakala@gmail.com](mailto:mauryakala@gmail.com). Contact Persons for clarification 97235707/66443900.

Entries must be submitted by school. Individual entries are accepted from MauryaKala members wards. Teachers and schools will be appreciated for participation. The competition will be judged by those with experience in imparting Hindi education, reputed poets and authors in Kuwait.

## EPA arranges to collect, dispose unused medicines

Environment Public Authority (EPA) announced last week the launch of a new campaign to 'Retrieve expired and unused medicines'. The campaign urged people to return unused medicines to local health centers so that they could be disposed of in a safe and non-hazardous manner by the EPA.

In a statement, the Director of the Public Relations and Media Department, Sheikha Al-Brahim, called on all those who have expired or unused medicines to participate in the ongoing campaign, which she said would continue until all such medications are disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

The statement added that the aim was to reduce health problems resulting from throwing expired medicines in household waste by returning them to health centers and disposing of them by those concerned with destroying them in a scientific and healthy manner.

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# Kuwaitization, jobs for nationals ahead of elections



The decision last month by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Rana Al-Faris to begin the phased replacement of all expatriate staff in the Municipality from 1 September and replace them with national workers is said to have commenced with the first batch of retrenched employees receiving termination notices.

The process is expected to continue over three phases and culminate with 100

percent Kuwaitization by July 2023. Each phase will result in ending a third of the contracts with expatriates, with the second and third phases to be implemented in February and July of 2023 respectively.

The retrenchment plan excludes children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, citizens of the Gulf states, bedouin, service workers such as drivers, and 50 percent of workers in burial services. The ministerial decision also prohibits the reappointment or transfer of foreign workers between municipality departments.

However, analysts warn of operational disruptions in the municipality because some of its jobs require skills that are not often available in the national workforce, despite the government's plans to train and prepare national workers.

This could also cause labor shortages and disruptions in project delivery, as well as act as a deterrent for white-collar immigrants, and thus lead to the transfer of foreign workers to other countries in the

region.

Political analysts believe the government is keen to speed up the Kuwaitization process ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of the month, in a bid to appease voters, and allay criticisms regarding the skewed demographics in the country.

According to plans envisioned by the authorities in 2018, the demographic structure will be transformed from its current 70:30 ratio between expats and nationals, to around 50:50 by 2025 and to 30:70 in favor of nationals by 2030.

While this looks highly unrealistic, the government is said to be pursuing a policy of replacement rather than creating new jobs to absorb nationals in the public sector workforce. This is apparently being done to prevent new workers further engorging the public sector and straining the wage bill in the budget.

Meanwhile, several ministries have announced job opportunities for nationals

in construction projects being undertaken by them. Last week, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW) announced the provision of job opportunities for Kuwaitis and the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti men in the context of encouraging national cadres to work in the private sector.

The ministry said these job opportunities will be made available in the private sector, specifically with companies that have signed contracts with the ministry, and called on those wishing to obtain an opportunity to visit the ministry's website to apply for the available opportunities.

Reports indicate that currently there are four contracts affiliated with the MEW as a first stage, in which those wishing to work can be employed, whether citizens or children of Kuwaiti women. "More than 200 employees can be employed on these contracts according to the percentage specified for each contract," noted a statement by the ministry.

## Education outcomes not in sync with job market

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In a media-interview last month, Dr. AlRubaie noted that the government was providing all support to equip and skill youth to help them succeed in the marketplace. "At the Youth Public Authority we have a job creation program where we are focusing on skills and career paths instead of a university degree," said Dr. AlRubaie. Pointing out that having a degree is no longer enough to land a job in an increasingly competitive labor market, he explained, "At YPA, we have the facility program certification, where we convert young people's education levels into more market-appropriate positions.

"We basically re-educate our youth. Kuwait needs more coders, cloud architects, web developers, risk managers, and auditors, so this is the direction in which we will be pushing our young stakeholders to explore their skills development." While accepting that many young nationals still preferred employment in the public sector, AlRubaie hoped that by equipping youth with requisite skill-sets needed in the labor market, "we can redirect more of our Kuwaiti youth from the government to the private sector".

Currently, ninety percent of jobs available are in the governmental sector, which is already highly saturated. "I think one of our biggest problems in Kuwait is latent unemployment, where people go to work with nothing to do all day. This relates to a large chunk of the workforce in Kuwait," said Dr. AlRubaie. Wasting time at work, day after day affects the individual both physically and mentally, and results in the low productivity that has become characteristic of the public sector in Kuwait. Providing high quality education and equipping youth with skills to meet market demand are seen as key to overcoming job-market anomalies in the country.

Education in Kuwait is a right guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution. The state not only considers education a moral and constitutional imperative, it is also a strategic priority given its importance to secure the sustainable growth and development of the country going into the future. In this regard, the state's 2035 strategic vision of New Kuwait, stresses the role of educational institutions in developing human resources and in training individuals to form part of a skilled national workforce. Education is viewed as the main tool in building a high caliber

society at the institutional, cultural, economic and social levels.

The government's commitment to education both as a social good and a prerequisite for its economic diversification strategy has led to significant outlay being directed towards education. According to the latest World Bank data, Kuwait's spending on education in 2020 was 6.6 percent of total GDP, and this spending formed nearly 12 percent of total government expenditure. But, outcome from these expenditures over the years have consistently been less than encouraging.

Despite being a pioneer in the region in establishing a higher education institution in the form of Kuwait University (KU) in the mid-1960s, today the country ranks low, relative to its peers in the region, in most international educational



assessment indices. In the 2019-20 Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings — an impartial and definitive source of data, insight and expertise on higher education worldwide — KU was placed in the range of 801-1000 among world universities. This was not only a drop from the 601-800 range it occupied in 2017-18, it was also well behind regional leader King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia (201-250), or Khalifa University in the United Arab Emirates (301-350).

According to a new World Bank report, educational levels in Kuwait have in recent years fallen by about 4.6 years — the educational level of high school graduates in Kuwait were found to be below the average for fourth-grade students. The fact that educational outcomes are not commensurate with expenses incurred by the state, was also reiterated in a recent report by leading economic consultancy firm, Al-Shall Economic Consultancy.

The consultancy, in its report titled, 'For Kuwait's Sake Let's Teach Our Children Integrity', called for initiating major education reforms, both at the general and higher levels, and making it a priority for the authorities. The report noted that the average cost of a student in government schools in its four stages, from kindergarten to secondary, was estimated at around KD3,800 annually.

This heavy public expenditure per pupil, said the report, was surpassed only by the student cost in private American schools, where it was KD3,900 annually. On the other hand, the annual average cost of students in bilingual schools was about KD2,900; it was around KD2,600 in the British schools, and the average cost was only KD500 per year in Indian schools, and KD427 in Arabic private schools. All of these institutions had better educational outcomes than government schools.

Education worldwide is witnessing a revolution in terms of reforms to curricula in order to bring them in line with rapidly evolving digital techniques and technologies. However, in Kuwait, the curricula in government schools still remain oriented towards equipping youth for jobs that are increasingly non-existent, and will no longer be relevant in future.

In a bid to improve the quality of education, the Ministry of Education, in association with the National Center for Educational Development (NCED), has over the years undertaken several programs in collaboration with the World Bank and other entities. However, an audit review conducted in 2018-19 by the State Audit Bureau was highly critical of the expenses incurred by the ministry in signing a contract with the World Bank aimed at improving the quality of school education.

The bureau pointed out that the contract which was signed for KD11 million failed to achieve its objectives, as the ministry failed to implement, supervise and follow-up on recommendations made by the World Bank. As a result, Kuwait, which in fiscal year 2016-2017 ranked 92nd in the world for the quality of secondary education, dropped to 111th position in 2018-2019 after the World Bank program was implemented — or not implemented by the ministry.

With all due respect to the venerable State Audit Bureau, it needs to be stated that the shortcoming in educational outcomes cannot be blamed solely on World Bank programs. In

a separate evaluation of its program, the World Bank had underlined several discrepancies in the implementation of its recommendations by the Education Ministry. The Bank noted there was little, if any, support for the education reform process among the executive and legislative arms of government, as well as among those tasked with implementing the programs in the classrooms.

In addition to the waste of funds and other irregularities pointed out by the Audit Bureau, there are also reports of alleged misappropriation of funds and other financial wrongdoings at the Ministry of Education. In June, the then Minister of Education Dr. Saud Al Harbi, referred several ministry employees to the Public Prosecution after it was discovered that they had been paying themselves monthly bonuses for which they were not eligible.

One senior administrative member is said to have awarded himself a bonus of KD1,500 per month since April 2019, while another lady working in the Private Education Department is alleged to have self-awarded herself a bonus of KD800 per month. Is it any surprise that the lack of values demonstrated by those responsible for teaching, should percolate down to those being taught. Witness the repeated warnings issued by school authorities to students of a zero-tolerance policy towards the rampant copying and cheating observed in annual examinations.

One reason for the continued decline in educational outcomes in Kuwait can be traced to those doing the teaching. In general, teachers in the national cadre, and even more so, expatriate teachers who are usually here on a brief contract period, lack any real commitment to their profession. For many of them teaching is just a half-day job that pays well and offers all the perquisites that come with a public sector job in Kuwait.

Teaching is more than just a sinecure profession; it needs to be considered a vocation and has to be undertaken by people who have a passion and dedication to teaching. Besides imparting knowledge, teachers are entailed with a huge responsibility — that of empowering, motivating and molding the next generation of Kuwaitis, and imbuing in them the mores and values of society. As long as this dedication to teaching does not exist among teachers, it is doubtful if any, World Bank or other, programs will be anything other than expensive exercises in futility.

# Failing the Pandemic Preparedness Test



**Mariana Mazzucato**

*Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, is Chair of the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All.*

The pandemic is not over. While the summer of 2022 is very different from the summer of 2020, because we now have vaccines, treatments, and a better understanding of the virus, it's not enough. Every week, 15,000 people still die from COVID-19. Poorer countries still struggle to deploy vaccines, tests, diagnostics, and other tools. And countries at all income levels remain woefully unprepared for the next pandemic, even though experts warn that its arrival is a matter of 'when', not 'if'.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, global leaders have acknowledged the need for greater coordination, collaboration, and collective financing to support improved pandemic preparedness and response (PPR). Following the recommendations of a High-Level Independent Panel, the G20 agreed last June to establish a new Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) — hosted by the World Bank, in partnership with the World Health Organization — to help fill the \$10.5 billion annual gap in PPR financing.

Many see the FIF as a long-overdue opportunity to change how we collectively address global common goods like health (or climate). Under a more inclusively governed global PPR support system, all countries would participate in decision-making and burden-sharing, and all would reap the same collective benefits. This would mean moving away from the outdated and ineffective donor-beneficiary status quo, where PPR is viewed as just another 'development' project. Instead, everyone would recognize that when it comes to averting global health crises, the needs, gaps, benefits, and responsibilities are collective and universal, even if they are allocated unevenly around the world.

After significant advocacy by poorer countries and civil society, the FIF is being designed to embody a more equitable and balanced governance model, with decision-making split evenly between rich donors and participating countries. But the question now is whether this formal balance of interests will become an operational reality. If low- and middle-income countries do not feel like they are in the driver's seat of their own national PPR strategies, the FIF will quickly become an unwanted and burdensome distraction.

This outcome is even more likely if there is little money on offer. Unfortunately, FIF pledges so far total just \$1.4 billion, which is around one-tenth of the world's annual PPR



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financing need, according to the World Bank.

Worse, there is no guarantee that such funding will be sustained over the long term, as demonstrated by the current struggles of the Global Fund, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and other institutions to replenish their funding. The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, which hosts the global COVAX vaccine-access facility, still has a \$15.2 billion funding gap for the 2022-23 fiscal year. The tepid global

advanced health systems are now struggling to keep up in the aftermath of COVID-19.

For example, longstanding worldwide vaccination programs are now running deficits, increasing millions of children's vulnerability to infectious disease. And COVID-19 has channeled money away from critical public-health priorities like combating HIV/AIDS — an enormous challenge in its own right which also increases vulnerability to COVID-19 and other diseases.

a 'pandemic clause' in its sovereign bonds, allowing it to suspend debt repayments in the event of a pandemic. This innovation mirrors the natural-disaster clause that it introduced in its recent debt restructuring, following a series of devastating hurricanes.

Given today's unprecedented levels of debt — which have been compounded by inflation, food insecurity, and climate-related disasters — such clauses are a no-brainer. Low- and middle-income countries should start adopting them en masse.

For its part, the International Monetary Fund needs to take the lead on developing a more ambitious 'debt-to-health swaps' mechanism, so that countries don't have to choose between buying essential medicines and repaying US and European hedge funds. And it should go without saying that the IMF must move away from its arbitrary and devastating austerity programs, which consistently force countries to cut public spending and keep money in reserves even when they are facing utterly destabilizing climate, health, and socio-economic crises.

An inclusively governed and well-funded FIF could make critical inroads toward preparing the world for the next pandemic, but only if it is accompanied by major reforms to the framework for financing global health initiatives. Without broader and immediate resourcing and relief efforts to stabilize low- and middle-income countries' economies, the FIF risks becoming a band-aid on a gunshot wound.

“ If low- and middle-income countries do not feel like they are in the driver's seat of their own national Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) strategies, the FIF will quickly become an unwanted and burdensome distraction. ”

response to the FIF's initial financing push — much of which appears to be cannibalizing from other important global health funds — does not bode well for the future.

Moreover, even if fundraising from short-sighted rich countries was not a problem, the FIF is designed to target only a small part of global PPR financing needs. One major area that it misses is national health systems. These are crucial for implementing effective pandemic responses, but even the most

The success of the FIF's PPR efforts requires a massive increase in financing for health systems in low- and middle-income countries, going well beyond the relatively meager and narrowly targeted \$1.4 billion, and more comprehensive and creative approaches to expanding poorer countries' fiscal space to invest in health.

For example, under Prime Minister Mia Mottley's dynamic leadership, Barbados is about to become the first country to include

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# Investing in Africa's Health



**Donald P. Kaberuka**

*A former president of the African Development Bank, is Board Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.*

There was a time, not so long ago, when an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence. AIDS, together with tuberculosis and malaria, killed millions of people and overwhelmed health systems worldwide, especially in Africa. But the world came together and fought back. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, established in 2002, is an unparalleled success story. Cooperation between developed and developing countries, the private sector, civil society, and affected communities has saved 44 million lives, and the combined death rate from these three diseases has been reduced by more than half.

Saving this many lives has had a huge economic impact. The Global Fund estimates that an investment of \$1 through the health programs it supports will result in \$31 in health gains and economic returns over three years. And since most of its investments are in Africa, the benefits will spread across the continent.

But the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed this rapid progress. While the death rate on the continent has not been as catastrophic as many feared, the pandemic has had a profoundly negative impact on Africa's health systems and on the fight against AIDS, TB, and malaria. Testing, diagnosis, and treatment for these diseases have been severely affected, threatening the gains made in previous decades. Worldwide deaths from malaria, for

example, increased by 13 percent in 2020, to a level not seen since 2012. Unless things change, the gap in health and economic outcomes between Africa and the rest of the world will widen.

Overseas aid remains vital. If we are to reverse the losses created by the pandemic and continue to do lifesaving work, the Global Fund needs to meet its fundraising target of \$18 billion over the next three years. The Fund's Replenishment Conference this month will bring together representatives from donor countries, the private sector, and civil-society groups seeking to renew commitments and ensure overarching support for the fight against AIDS, TB, and malaria.

“ One way to prop up local health systems is to increase tax revenues. Many African governments face a significant ‘tax gap’ — the difference between what their tax laws should, in theory, deliver and what governments manage to collect. ”

But domestic investment is also crucial for securing health sustainability, especially given the impact of recent global shocks on both advanced and emerging economies. To this end, the Global Fund supports initiatives like the African Union's African Leadership Meeting (ALM), which advocates for increased domestic resources for health.

While the Global North can look forward to the post-COVID economic recovery, Africa is still lagging behind the rest of the world in vaccine access and uptake. The continent will need

more time to recover fully from the pandemic. How, then, in the face of an uncertain economic outlook — with African GDP dropping, inflation rising, and food and energy costs soaring — can governments realistically increase health spending?

While there is no silver bullet, we have identified several actions that governments can take to promote investment in the health sector. For starters, economic recovery is a virtuous circle: GDP growth enables greater investment in health, and a healthier population is more productive. The next few years could be challenging as the longer-term consequences of the pandemic and the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine adversely affect investment and

more money available for health.

Governments should also allocate more funds to public health. Very few African countries currently devote 15 percent of their national budgets to the health sector — the target set by the 2001 Abuja Declaration. This, in turn, impedes their ability to ramp up efforts to eradicate AIDS, TB, malaria, and other epidemics, and thus reduces their chances of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The private sector must do its part as well, whether through corporate taxes, employer-led health insurance, or workplace health schemes. Private companies benefit enormously from a healthier population and, as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, can suffer dramatic losses when infectious diseases run wild.

Of course, it is also important to make health spending more efficient. This would involve coordination between finance and health ministries. Finance ministries can support planning, budgeting, and spending by providing a clear indication of available resources over the medium term and by being responsive to changing needs, including health emergencies. Meanwhile, health ministries can design more streamlined and cost-effective public programs.

Pulling these levers requires political leadership and sustained effort. The Global Fund directly supports African communities and governments as they work to strengthen local health systems. But only a combination of international aid and domestic financing can turbocharge the efforts to eliminate AIDS, TB, and malaria by 2030. And only by ending these epidemics can we propel Africa's economies, bolster the world's defenses against future outbreaks, and free millions from the burden of disease.



# Central Banking Must Go Green



**Megan Greene**  
Senior Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, is a member of the Regenerative Crisis Response Committee.



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Just as there is no question that climate change brings enormous economic and financial risks, there should be no question that central banks can and must play a role in addressing this mother of all market failures. As central banks in the United States and Europe tighten credit to regain control of inflation, they should also use their supervisory and monetary-policy tools to catalyze and incentivize the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. Inaction is not an option, even if most central banks have not officially incorporated climate-risk management into their mandates.

Most central banks already accept that they will have to help navigate the transition to net-zero carbon emissions. Under new reporting rules established by the Bank of England — through the Prudential Regulation Authority — more than 1,300 of the largest UK-registered companies and financial institutions now must disclose 'climate-related financial information'. Similarly, the European Central Bank is encouraging climate-related disclosures by announcing that it will accept as collateral only assets that comply with its forthcoming Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.

Even the US Federal Reserve — one of the last major central banks to join the Network of Central Banks and Supervisors for Greening the Financial System — now accepts that it must play a supervisory and risk-mitigation role when it comes to climate change. Last year, it established the Supervision Climate

the risks posed by climate change, because only specific portfolios were stress tested, and the shocks that were modeled did not feed into broader economic downturns. Moreover, neither set of tests has yet been used to influence capital requirements. But that is likely to change in the future, and when it does, banks will be further motivated to align their portfolios with global climate targets.

While the Fed is only in the 'very early stages' of considering climate stress testing, as Chair Jerome Powell put it to the House Financial Services Committee last year, the BOE and the ECB are forging ahead in other ways as well. To green its balance sheet, the BOE has started tilting its corporate-bond purchases toward firms with stronger environmental records, with a goal of reducing the carbon intensity of its corporate-bond portfolio by 25 percent by 2025. And the ECB recently announced a similar scheme to decarbonize its corporate-bond holdings, starting this October.

When central banks announce that they are buying certain assets, the appetite for those assets rises and their issuers' borrowing costs fall. The BOE and the ECB are therefore easing financing conditions for greener companies just when energy has once again emerged as a key driver of inflation. While central banks cannot bring down energy costs, they can help to reduce the private sector's dependence on fossil fuels. If done the right way, this will also serve their price-stability mandates. Greening the economy entirely through carbon prices or regulation would embed the cost of carbon in prices, causing inflation to accelerate. But by subsidizing cleaner alternatives to dirty energy, central banks can both contain inflation and support growth.

One way to do this is by using dual interest rates to incentivize private-sector green lending. Both the BOE and the ECB have already explored this option in response to the pandemic. The BOE has redeployed the Funding for Lending Scheme to support the UK economy, and the ECB is using its targeted longer-term refinancing operations for the same purpose. But rather than just targeting central banks' lending to the private sector, these schemes should be used to give banks preferential (negative) rates if they direct the funds toward green investments.

Although the Fed has never used dual interest rates, the plumbing to do so is already in place. It could simply set its discount rate (what it charges banks for direct loans) below the federal funds rate (what banks charge each other to lend excess reserves overnight), and then offer banks the discounted rate if they deploy the funds for green lending.

Obviously, such proposals raise political questions. Elected officials do not want unelected central bankers to make decisions about how to allocate resources in the economy. Most central bankers do not want that responsibility, either, because they

know that it could ultimately threaten their independence. But even if dual interest rates are not an ideal response to climate change, they may be the only feasible one. If politicians were capable of mobilizing private capital for the green transition, they would have done it by now.

By pushing banks to incorporate climate change into their risk models, conducting climate stress tests to improve capital ratios, reducing borrowing costs for green firms, and using dual interest rates to subsidize green investments, central banks can make the

economy and financial system more resilient.

This year's energy-price spike has shown how our reliance on fossil fuels can undermine price stability in the short term. In preparing for the medium and long term, we should recognize that the green transition, too, will be inflationary if it is achieved primarily through carbon pricing and regulation. Central banks should use the tools at their disposal to influence demand and pricing for green assets. Doing so is not a distraction from their core mandate of achieving price stability; it is crucial to its success.

“ Relying entirely on carbon prices or regulation to green the economy could cause inflation to accelerate. But by subsidizing greener alternatives to fossil fuels, central banks can both contain inflation and support growth. ”

Committee to assess US-based financial institutions' microprudential readiness, as well as the Financial Stability Climate Committee to evaluate the macroprudential risks of climate change.

But central banks should go further. Rather than just navigating the green transition, they should drive it forward by creating incentives for the private sector. In May, the BOE released climate stress-test results showing that UK-based banks could incur £225 billion (\$265 billion) in losses by 2050, and that insurers face a 15 percent fall in asset values (under the worst-case scenario). And in its inaugural climate stress tests, the ECB reported in July that eurozone banks could experience losses of €70 billion (\$70 billion) in the event of a disorderly transition to a lower-carbon economy.

In fact, these results significantly understate

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# Best Way to Preserve Nature Is Also the Fairest



**Hindou Ibrahim**

*President of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, is a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee.*

This is a critical year for the natural environment. Negotiations by world leaders in Montreal this December will determine the fate of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, a far-reaching agreement that will set the world's environmental agenda for the next decade. The future of perhaps a million plant and animal species hangs in the balance, as do the lives and livelihoods of billions of human beings.

Biodiversity is not about simply counting trees, birds, fish, or insects. These certainly matter, but so, too, does the broader balance of the ecosystems on which they, we, and many other species rely. Moreover, the 'we' must include indigenous peoples, who have a particularly important role to play in environmental talks.

I am one of them. My people, the Mbororo of Chad, are like many other groups that have ancient ties to ancestral lands around the world. We are proven stewards of much of the world's precious yet dwindling natural inheritance. Deforestation on our lands is much lower than elsewhere. Vegetation is thicker, wildlife is more abundant, food chains are sturdier. Where we live, nature's vitality has not yet been extinguished. As much as one-third of the world's tropical forests,

peatlands, and mangroves — carbon-dense ecosystems that account for 80 percent of global biodiversity — are found on indigenous lands.

This is no accident. For indigenous peoples, land is everything. It is the source of our food, shelter, and medicine, and the wellspring of our culture and history. Over countless generations, we have learned to live well on our land. We know how to protect it, how to restore it, and how to serve as its engineers and nurturers, not its destroyers.

Science has long confirmed indigenous peoples' unique contributions to Earth's well-being. In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel

on Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow last year, when several countries and private donors pledged \$1.7 billion to support indigenous peoples and local communities' conservation and climate-advocacy efforts. It was an unprecedented commitment to a far-flung but increasingly united population.

But while we welcome world leaders' growing recognition of indigenous knowledge and practices, fulfilling our stewardship role requires more than approbation. To continue serving as the natural world's most effective guardians, we need the right to own — and thus to remain on and continue to manage — our ancestral lands.

of this decade is a good idea, provided that it is pursued in close partnership with indigenous peoples and local communities. That means ensuring full inclusion, recognition of our land rights, and our free, prior, and informed consent. We need to be fully represented at the table when new agreements are struck, and when projects to protect and restore ecosystems are being designed.

To carry out this vital mission, we also need access to funding. The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI), which focuses squarely on the intersection of land-tenure rights and community-led conservation, is a good start. CLARIFI fills a key gap by channeling funds directly to indigenous and community-led initiatives. It aims to raise \$10 billion by 2030, and to expand legally recognized indigenous territories by 400 million hectares. This is crucial to curbing deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. The goal is to increase these communities' legal land ownership to at least 50 percent of all tropical forests.

If the world commits to investing in indigenous peoples, we can then take it from there. With sufficient funding on the ground — not just on paper and in speeches — we can do more than anyone else to protect nature and preserve the world's biodiversity.

Even though finalizing the Global Biodiversity Framework is crucial to prevent wholesale ecosystem collapse, the process has run into delays, disagreements, and reluctance by key parties. World leaders must rise to the occasion and secure an agreement that fully recognizes indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights and unique contributions.

“ Science has confirmed indigenous peoples' unique contributions to Earth's well-being. In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stressed that indigenous knowledge is critical to managing global warming and its effects. ”

on Climate Change stressed that indigenous knowledge is critical to managing global warming and its effects. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reached the same conclusion with respect to preserving biodiversity. In a follow-up report this year, IPBES further emphasized the importance of indigenous people's contributions to global conservation.

The world's growing recognition of indigenous knowledge was also reflected at

With indigenous peoples being relentlessly displaced, often violently, from territory that we have always called home, land-tenure reform and secure land rights have become absolutely crucial. Otherwise, outsider settlement, agricultural expansion, industrial extraction, desertification, and disease will continue to sever our historic bonds to the lands we live on.

Governments must commit to managing land more sustainably. The 30x30 plan to protect 30 percent of the world's land and sea by the end

# Tattoo Troubles that impinge health

Using personal body space to display tattoo art may appear to be a modern trend, but, as evidence of such art on mummified skins reveal, it is an ancient art form that has been around for thousands of years. Irrespective of its longevity over the millennia, what is relevant here is its implication on the health of the wearer.

Currently there are few, if any, regulations on the chemicals used in tattoo inks, nor have there been extensive studies conducted on the impact of these inks on the body. Though the European Union (EU) has recently banned specific pigments in tattoos and permanent make-up, including Blue 15:3 and Green 7, citing bladder cancer among the risks, the United States has not followed suit.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), does not regulate tattoo inks, and there is no federal certification standard for tattoo artists, adding to the lack of awareness around potential concerns. New research by scientists at Binghamton University in the US is providing some insights that could prove to be cautionary.

The study team analyzed nearly 100 inks and reported that even among inks that displayed an ingredient label, there were inaccuracies in the constituents. They also found that some of the particles used in these inks could harm cells. Although the jury is out on whether these ingredients can have long-term health implications, it is interesting to take a look at how the inks are made and how they interact with the body.

The color comes from a solid pigment, which is suspended in a liquid carrier that could contain one or several ingredients



like water, vodka, witch-hazel or even ingredients used in popular mouthwashes. The pigment itself contains a range of chemical ingredients, including malachite and chrome oxide used in green pigment, and iron oxide and cadmium red used in the red pigment.

When a person gets a tattoo, artists using machines can puncture the skin with a needle 50 to 3,000 times per minute. The carrier solution then transports the ink into the epidermis or middle skin layer. The immune system thinks an invader is infiltrating the body and springs into action, attempting to save the body from the wound. This action is how the tattoo becomes permanent.

As macrophage cells of the immune system rush to the wound, the ink gets stuck in them. In turn, the ink sticks to the dermis and stays there permanently. To find out what happens to the body and cells in the long-term, researchers at Binghamton University interviewed 100 tattoo artists and discovered they had preferred brands of ink but were unsure of the contents.

particle can get into cells, damage them, and it might lead to problems like cancer

The researchers admit that their study only scratches the surface of tattoo ink ingredients and potential concerns, but it also builds on a small body of knowledge. Other studies have shown that tattoo inks can cause among others, allergic reactions, infections, and irritation

Tattoo ink-related allergic reactions can be debilitating and may not show up for months or even years. When you have an allergic reaction to tattoo ink, it is a constant thing and can be very painful. Red ink is found to have the most reports of allergic reactions, followed by yellow ink.

It is important to seek care if you notice issues, particularly around the tattoo sight, including worsening pain and the area feels hot. Tattoo removal could help alleviate the pain, but it can take several weeks and typically involves using a laser. It may not completely remove the tattoo, and it is unclear whether laser removal could cause more harm than good. The procedure could lead to carcinogenic compounds being released into the skin.

Doctors warn people looking to get a tattoo to first ensure the tattoo artist is professional and experienced. They should also assess the sanitation of the artist's shop and processes, and ask about aftercare. Also speak to a healthcare provider, especially if you have known allergies.

Given that specific blue and green pigments raised enough flags in the EU to get banned and red and yellow have a higher likelihood of allergies, people may consider skipping those pigments or going with an all-black tattoo.



## Micro breaks boost performance

Apparently there is more to the American expression 'Take five', which refers to taking a five-minute break to relax in the midst of any strenuous task. New studies by researchers at West University of Timișoara in Romania show that people engaged in mentally tasking types of work could realize a boost to their performance and productivity from taking short breaks from work.

For their analysis the scientists reviewed results of micro-break studies over the past 30 years. One of their findings was that while there was no shared definition for how long a micro-break should last in order to realize a benefit. The researchers concluded the upper limit should be about 10 minutes. They found that in general, the closer you are to 10 minutes, the better you will perform. However, you will still benefit from shorter breaks. The number and duration of work breaks were found to be less important than ensuring you take a break from work. These micro-breaks were found to reduce fatigue, increase performance, and optimize energy expenditure.

However, because the duration of these breaks are so brief, many people wonder what they could do to relax in just 10 minutes. Productivity specialists, who ascertain the best ways to utilize time and improve productivity, recommend several relaxation techniques that someone can engage in so as to gain maximum benefit in the minimum time.

The specialists point out that the basic strategy should be on movement whether it is getting up from sitting, walking around, stretching or doing push-ups does not matter, as long as you are getting vertical and moving around so as to get blood flowing, which is the healthiest use of even a free minute.

Doing something physical even in small amounts is found to be beneficial because it will benefit your mental and physical health. For example, you can do squats or stretch next to your desk. Intentionally standing after sitting at a desk, momentarily stretching, taking a pause to close your eyes, or taking a mindful deep breath, are all examples of micro-breaks.

A few other ideas include watering a plant, changing the placement of an object in the room, getting yourself a glass of water. However, it needs to be added that spending the 10-minute break to catch up on the latest 'nuggets of tripe' from social media, or other activities that involve screen time are not the best use of this relaxing time.

Online activity during the break time will only add to the eye strain, especially if the work after the break involves looking at a computer screen. Instead, try using the 20/20/20 technique. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Another easy to remember rule of relaxation is the 20-8-2. For every 20 minutes of sitting, take 8 minutes of standing and 2 minutes of moving.

The number of breaks you take in a day is also important. Experts note that the attention span of a person is not very long. A rule of thumb is to take a break every 50 to 90 minutes. The predictability and certainty of an anticipated break also helps with task completion, prioritization, and time management.



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# Polish, Ukrainian embassies hold exhibition ‘Mom, I Don’t Want War’



The Polish Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Paweł Lechowicz inaugurated the art exhibition to immortalize the feelings of children around the world following war and occupation by forces, including what happened 70 years ago in Poland, 30 years ago in Kuwait and what is happening now in Ukraine. He added children all over the world feel the same way, and they say “we do not want war”, pointing out that this photo exhibition put on display pictures drawn by children to express what they feel of the war 70 years ago in Poland, which is similar to what the Ukrainian children feel today.

In his speech during the ceremony, he said a child is not a soldier even though he suffers from it and this exhibition is incredibly “a moving testimony” about the war. The exhibition includes drawings by Polish children from 1946, which serves as a historical testimony of their experiences during the occupation in World War II from 1939-1945, and kept in the Central Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw, and contemporary drawings of Ukrainian children, relating to the war currently underway in Ukraine, collected on the ‘Mom-I See War’ portal.

He stressed that war is always most clearly seen through the eyes of children, regardless of place and time, and it is a great evil. The child is always a victim of this calamity, pointing out that the similarity between historical and current drawings is remarkable. In the drawings the children portray their imagination of tanks, planes bombing towns and villages and destroying the infrastructure and explosions killing and maiming people.

They paint the wounded, the dead, the destroyed houses and the graves, they paint themselves and their families, and they paint the evacuation and the escape. But they also bring hope and dreams for the future by compiling pictures and words together in groups.

He went on to say, war always means pain, reprimand and losses, but children are the most vulnerable during wars, they sometimes do not fully understand everything, but they

feel the acute pain. War deprives them of a happy childhood and sometimes life itself. Children see war as enemy missiles destroying schools, kindergartens, hospitals and homes before their very eyes, and their parents and friends dying before their eyes. They often convey their feelings, emotions and experiences through drawings.

He said the project ‘Mom, I Don’t Want War’ collected more than 10,000 children’s drawings about war and peace in Ukraine, and was created to show the war through the eyes of the children of Ukraine and to draw attention of the international community to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Palanutsa said today’s exhibition is an important event within the Ukrainian week, pointing out that the Polish embassy has always supported Ukraine and is hosting an exhibition of Polish and Ukrainian photos under the title ‘Mom, I Don’t Want War’.

He added that there is a similarity in what the Polish and Ukrainian children drew, which indicates their feeling of their rejection of war and to emphasize the establishment of security and peace in the world.



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