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Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Each year on 10 December the world marks Human Rights Day, in commemoration of this day in 1948 when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The UDHR, considered a seminal document in human development, proclaims the inalienable human rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being. Human Rights Day provides an opportunity to create awareness and promote respect for the rights and freedoms of everyone as enshrined in the UDHR. The theme for this year's Human Rights Day is 'Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All', condenses the importance of ensuring human rights of all people for a just and sustainable future.

Human rights is not a recent idea

— notions about the basic rights and responsibilities of people have been an integral part of all societies throughout history. The UDHR underlines the principle that every person has dignity and value, and that a natural law, higher than the laws of any nation, bestows on each individual certain inalienable rights. These rights include among others the right to life and liberty, freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the right to health, work and education. These human rights are also 'universal' in that they are the same for all people everywhere, no matter who they are, where they live, how they live, or what they think or believe.

In a statement ahead of the start of year-long celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of UDHR on 10 December 2023, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) stated:

Human Rights Day — 10 December —



"Human rights recognise our freedom to make choices about our lives and to develop our potential as human beings, but it also involves responsibility and duties towards other people and towards the communities we live in. Human rights guides how people interact with others at all levels in society — in the

family, in schools, in workplaces, in the community, and in international relations".

Kuwait's record on human rights is checked at best. In 2021, in its annual publication on human rights practices in Kuwait, the US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor, noted that

although Kuwait had made significant advances in its human rights record over the years, there were still several areas that remained unaddressed. These included continued corruption, lack of transparency, and discrimination against minorities, including women, gender-variants, migrants and stateless persons.

In fairness to Kuwait, it needs to be added that most of these human rights violations are not unique to the State, and are applicable to many countries around the world, including the United States and the European Union. However, the pervasive nature of this phenomena does not absolve Kuwait of the responsibility to address and ameliorate the human rights environment in this country.

And, Kuwait has been taking steps in this regard, as acknowledged by the State Department report, which noted that although impunity

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Kenyan Embassy and community celebrate National Day



H.E. Halima Mohamud,
Ambassador of Kenya

Kenya gained independence on 12 December 1963 and this year marks the 59th anniversary of Independence. On the occasion of the celebration of the National Day this year, the Kenyan Embassy in Kuwait organized a get-together for the Kenyan community in Kuwait on 10 December 2022 at the Green Island Park along Gulf Street.

Ambassador of Kenya, H.E. Halima Mohamud shared some reflections of the event and the celebration of Independence Day this year. Ambassador Halima began by noting that Kenya has made huge strides over the years in all spheres of development, achievements that all Kenyans are very proud of.

"Kenya is now a middle income country, a vibrant democracy, the largest economy in Eastern Africa and among the leading economies in the continent. Kenya is also the anchor state for our region and the continent in many ways including peace and security; a respected member of the community of nations, a pace setter and a champion in the continent and globally on many important agendas including innovation, climate change and multilateralism.

"The journey to the modern day state has not been easy and many sacrifices had to be made. The commemoration of Independence Day therefore is an important day for Kenyans to reflect on this journey and the prospects ahead.

"The diaspora forum for our community here in Kuwait provided an opportunity for the embassy to meet, under one roof, a large number of Kenyans living and working in Kuwait. We have witnessed a growing number of Kenyans coming to work in Kuwait, and therefore it was an opportune moment, on such an historic day, to welcome new members of our community and to engage with the broader membership of the Kenyan community in Kuwait.

"The Government of Kenya has also placed an important focus on the diaspora and there is now a conversation that is ongoing in terms of how to effectively engage the Kenyan diaspora all over the world in terms of how to create more impact on their contribution to national development in the country. In this regard, as an embassy here, we have an important role in ensuring that members of our community keep a good focus on their work and professional experience, that they are law abiding and maintain the great working ethics that Kenya is known for and shine as an example for other diaspora communities in Kuwait.

"Let me also add that Kenya derives a lot of pride from our widely regarded education system and I can say without doubt we have one of the most qualified, hardworking human resources with a very positive attitude to work and professionalism. Therefore we are pleased to note the expanding people-to-people exchanges between the people of our two countries. But we are witnessing and encouraging greater connections between our two countries, not only through the labor sector, but also most importantly through trade and commerce. As an embassy we would like to reinforce that and help in fostering these people-to-people ties to become a defining feature of the bilateral relationship as we seek to strengthen the level of cooperation between our two countries.

"Kenya and Kuwait have maintained a very good dialogue at the Government-to-Government level and we intend to harness this positive course to give more impetus to our bilateral cooperation framework and to consolidate bilateral ties in mutually beneficial and priority areas of cooperation including trade and investment and tourism, health, education, air transport among others.

"Finally, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kenya and Kenyans in Kuwait, I also wish to express profound appreciation to the Government and the people of Kuwait for being a magnanimous host and providing opportunities for strengthening the bonds of cooperation between the people of our two countries."

Embassy of United Arab Emirates marks National Day



Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrated the country's 51st National Day on 2 December. The event was attended by Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah along with various other officials, diplomats, and several prominent members of Kuwaiti society.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of UAE, H.E. Dr. Matar Al Neyadi, affirmed that the UAE-Kuwaiti relations are an exceptional example of solidarity and cooperation at all levels, while also

pointing to the keenness of the two countries to push that relationship forward towards further progress and prosperity.

For his part, Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi praised the Kuwaiti-Emirati relations in all fields, and noted the achievements made by the UAE. He congratulated UAE's leaders and its people on this occasion, and wished them progress and prosperity.

A number of Heads of Diplomatic Missions affiliated to Kuwait, headed by the Dean of Diplomatic Corps and

Ambassador of Tajikistan, Dr. Zubaydullah Zabidov offered their congratulations to the UAE, noting that the UAE is an important country for the Gulf region.

Former Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah congratulated the UAE leadership and people on the occasion, and added that the UAE has made great achievements in all fields at the local, Gulf and international levels. While the Emirati role in support of the Gulf Cooperation Council is remarkable as well as UAE's support for joint Arab action.

Swiss Embassy organizes lecture on global water shortage

The Swiss Embassy organized a lecture on global water shortage to highlight issues raised by global water shortage. Speaking at the event, Ambassador of Switzerland H.E. Tiziano Palmelli emphasized the need for people to begin coexisting with smaller amounts of water, and urged the government and private sector to raise more awareness on the need to rationalize water usage and prevent its wastage.

For her part, Regional Head of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation at the Embassy of Switzerland to the United Arab Emirates, Hanna Kabeder, stressed that the world suffers from water scarcity, and therefore coordinated efforts must be made to optimize water usage and reduce wastage. Pointing out that the Gulf is the most affected region by water scarcity, she added that several measures have been taken by the authorities to address this problem, face this challenge and achieve sustainable use of water.

She said that the problem is exacerbated in Kuwait, as the country has very little natural water resources, a high consumption rate, near total dependence on high-cost desalination for potable water, and a growing population that increased demand



for water. Elaborating on her meeting with officials of the United Nations in Kuwait, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the Environment Public Authority, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she revealed that discussions centered on a number of issues of common interest, including ways to achieve sustainable use of water and better air quality.

Adding that by the beginning of 2050, nearly 50 percent of the world's population will be subject to water scarcity, she called for joint efforts to confront the water crisis before it became

an existential threat.

During the event, Ambassador Palmelli also praised the strong level of bilateral relations between Switzerland and Kuwait. He revealed that way back in 1930, Kuwait was the first in the region to discover Switzerland as a tourist destination, and that the Kuwaiti tourist continue to enjoy a good reputation in his country.

Noting that the demand for visas to Switzerland depended on the season, the ambassador disclosed that measures were being taken to increase the number of employees specialized in issuing visas during the next summer season, in order to issue more visas daily.

Qatar eases entry restrictions on GCC citizens, residents

A communique from the Qatari Ministry of Interior issued last week stated that GCC citizens and residents would be allowed to enter Qatar without the need to register for the Hayya card, which was previously needed by anyone seeking to enter Qatar during the ongoing FIFA World Cup 2022.

The statement clarified that Gulf citizens and residents coming to Qatar from all border points would be allowed into the country without registering for

digital Hayya cards. However, the card, along with the ticket, was required to attend World Cup matches

The ministry added that those arriving in Qatar via land in private vehicles and wanting to use public buses to reach their destinations are welcomed to do so, as parking for vehicles at border points would be provided without fees. However, to avail of the 'no parking fee' facility, they would need to register on the Interior Ministry's website 12 hours prior to their



arrival. The statement affirmed that these measures were taken to allow people in the region to enjoy the festivities related to the World Cup and fan areas, but those wanting to attend matches must have the card to attend matches.



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Diplomats spearhead activism against Gender Based Violence

The social phenomena of widespread, persistent and pernicious gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls remains one of the worst forms of human rights violation in the world today. The most recent global estimates provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) show that, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family. These heinous acts remain largely unreported due to impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it.

Violence against women and girls all over the world continues to be an obstacle to achieving equality, development, peace as well as to the fulfillment of women and girls' human rights. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November marks the start each year of the launch of the UNiTE campaign — an initiative spearheaded by the United Nations entity, UN Women, which involves 16 days of activism to



raise awareness on Gender Based Violence (GBV), and to prevent and eliminate all violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The 16-day campaign — which begins on 25 November and concludes on 10 December, the day that commemorates the International Human Rights Day — aims to mobilize all of society to become activists for the prevention of violence against women and girls, and to stand in solidarity with women's rights activists working for a world free of VAWG. Over the years, the campaign has become a rallying point around the world for women's rights activists and others who support the prevention and elimination

of GBV, and work to promote a more gender-equal world.

In Kuwait, as part of this year's UNiTE campaign, women diplomats stationed in Kuwait, supported by UN agencies represented in the country, as well as in cooperation with government entities, private sector enterprises, civil society organizations and volunteers, have been holding a variety of activities and programs to raise awareness on GBV, and the need to prevent and eliminate VAWG from society.

Last week, as part of our two-part coverage of the '16-days of activism' campaign, we heard from several women ambassadors, as well as from United Nations and European Union representatives in the country, on some of the measures that can be undertaken in Kuwait and elsewhere to prevent GBV.

We also learned from them about some of the programs being initiated by their embassies and offices to promote the campaign against violence towards women and girls. In their comments, the diplomats also underlined the need to educate children from a young age on the concepts of non-violence and respect for women and girls, and stressed the importance of promoting gender-equality in society to prevent and eliminate GBV.

In our concluding two-part coverage, we hear from the ambassadors of France and Indonesia on their views on preventing and ending gender-based violence (GBV).



H.E. Claire Le Flecher
Ambassador of France

Kuwait has adopted a Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, which is something we have strongly encouraged. We see that Kuwait, and notably its Minister of Social Affairs, is taking Gender Based Violence seriously, by allocating effort and resources to

open safe structures to shelter victims. Our Embassy is actively participating in the Orange campaign against Gender Based Violence. You can for example currently see a photographic exhibition on violence against women, at the French Consulate and at the French Institute. In addition, the French Embassy will support the Kuwait Society for Human Rights in an awareness campaign soon to be launched on social media. Finally, we will also be distributing a brochure relating the conclusions of a diwaniya that was held at the Résidence de France on June 29 on this theme. These days we are also collaborating with the Ambassador of Australia H.E. Melissa Kelly, and I have taken part in the #16Days campaign, where 10 female ambassadors to Kuwait share their visions to unite and reduce gender-based violence.

We also have a partnership with the Kuwait Society for Human Rights on advocacy, using art and cartoons to reach the younger crowd. We do believe that eradicating violence begins with the education of children, boys and girls. Achieving gender equality should be a goal for all of society, men and women together. In an egalitarian society, bodies of all are respected, and gender-based violence will no longer have any basis. We can, all together, be proud of the progress made and of our work to eliminate GBV.



H.E. Lena Maryana
Ambassador of Indonesia

We need to keep campaigning to men that, if given the same chances as our male counterparts, women have the capabilities to do things and prove themselves.

And, we have to keep campaigning to women that we can actually achieve the

things we may think impossible, if we allow ourselves to have the courage and willingness to try.

In each and every event and occasion that the Indonesian Embassy has held or attended, I always stress on gender equality in my speeches.

These are continuance campaigns and endless effort to build better understanding within our communities that women and men are equals, and not only we are against GBV, we are against violence in all forms.

As part of this continued campaign, we are aiming to make close contact with schools through supporting their cultural programs, which gives us the opportunity to encourage children to embrace different cultures, as well as gender equality that will build their early respect towards each other regardless of gender, race, nationality, or other differences.

The more understanding between men and women that we are equals and partners in any undertaking; that we will not really stand strong without the support of one another, the more we will begin to realize that encouraging one another for the betterment regardless of our gender will create a better future for all and that violence are the tools for the weak.

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Thought for the week “Choose to make a difference instead of choosing to be indifferent today.”

Caroline Naoroji

Government to initiate over 50 mega projects

The government is reportedly planning on giving the green-light for implementing around 56 mega projects over the next four years, which are projected to cost the exchequer a total of nearly KD23 billion. The largest share of this spending will be on 12 housing projects at a cost of KD10.2 billion, followed by 10 projects



in the oil sector at a cost of KD5.8 billion, and several other development projects at a total cost of KD7 billion.

The launch of these mega projects are also intended to support government plans to encourage greater private sector participation in the economy. As part of this plan,

the government will implement the necessary legislative and executive steps to involve the private sector in housing projects. A draft law is being readied to provide land in proposed new residential cities to the private sector, which will then undertake the development of housing projects on these lands.

Among the upcoming cities where the government will develop the basic underlying infrastructure and then invite the private sector to undertake development of housing projects include: Sabah Al-Ahmad, Jaber Al-Ahmad, and the South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah cities, in addition, housing projects in Al-Wafra, Al-Mutlaa, and West and South Abdullah Al-Mubarak cities, as well as the affordable housing project, will also be implemented by the private sector. The authority in charge of implementing these projects will be the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

Capital spending on these mega projects is expected to be raised by borrowing from local and international debt markets. Among the projects for which the government is inviting bids from the private sector are:

Workers city project, Al-Saffarin Market, Air Cargo City Project, Educational and cultural center on Abdullah Al-Ahmad Street, Al-Jahrah waterfront, Mubarakiya market and car parks, as well as developing the structural plan for Sulaibikhat Bay.

ICAI organizes international conference, 'Prism Possibilities'



Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Kuwait Chapter organized the second iteration of their annual International Conference under the title 'Prism Possibilities' on 3 December at Radisson Blu Hotel Kuwait.

A souvenir to mark the event was released by the chief guest for the evening, the Charge d'affaires at the Indian Embassy, Smita Patil. Due to their inability to attend the event, the ICAI President CA. (Dr.) Debashis Mitra, and the Vice President CA. Aniket Sunil Talati addressed the audience through video conference.

Renowned speakers from India who are experts in their field shared their success stories and the unique ways they converted possibilities to opportunities.

The speakers of the day were Partner and Chief Talent Officer at Deloitte India, and President of National HR Development Network, S.V. Nathan, Founder of Goonj and a Raman Magsaysay award winner, Anshu Gupta, CEO, Kotak Investment Advisors, Lakshmi Iyer, Kargil War veteran, Capt. Akhilesh Saxena, and spokesperson for Mumbai Dabbawalas, Ritesh Andre.

The speakers then elaborated on their professional and social achievements. Mr. Nathan expanded on how an idea can change life, while Mr. Gupta explained his charity work that emphasized, 'Dignity, not charity. Ms Iyer then spoke about the investment potentials in India, the 'Land of Opportunities, while Capt. Saxena, speaking on the topic titled, 'Arise, Awake and Ascend', said that to realize opportunities one must have a dream and a passion for what they want to achieve.

In his riveting speech titled 'Think about the box' Mr. Andre explained how the Mumbai Dabbawalas collect



over 200,000 tiffin boxes of office-goers daily before 9am, deliver them to the correct offices before 1pm and return the empty boxes before 6pm. Noting that there are more than 5,000 dabbawalas in Mumbai who engage in this traditional delivery services without any technological aid or the use of private vehicles, he added, they achieve this remarkable feat with a rate of less than one missed tiffin box in over six million deliveries.

Pointing out that this is a record that even the most modern and technologically sophisticated delivery service is not able to replicate, he revealed that the dabbawalas employ a unique coding system that enables the delivery of the right tiffin box to the right owner every time and everyday. A panel that included Abdullah Al Ajmi, co-founder of Hesabe, Divanshu Jain founder of KATCH, Jamal Al Humoud founder and CEO of Journey, and Ali Abdul Hassan, co-founder and CEO of TAP, and was moderated by CA Sunny Bhatia, the CEO of Kuwait Projects Holding Company, then discussed the practical aspects of start-up universe, as well as the growth of new businesses and online businesses during and after COVID-19.

As a part of Indian Cultural Presentation, Kinkini Ensemble under the guidance of Karnataka Kalashri. Guru. Rangashree, a classical dance performance titled 'Bharatham' was presented by Srivibha, Gayathri Devi and Vidhyavathi. Vote of Thanks was presented by CA. Rabin Gonsalves, Vice Chairperson, ICAI Kuwait Chapter. Raffle draws were conducted to maintain the excitement of the audience, and the evening's program was ably compered by Lloyd D'Souza. The program came to an end with a grand buffet dinner.

RECIPE

Hot Pot Mexican Rice



Hot Pot Mexican Rice is the perfect side dish to any Mexican food. This fluffy and flavorful rice is made with only a few simple ingredients. Arroz rojo, which means 'red rice' in Spanish, is the most requested side dish in Mexican cuisine and is perfect for filling burritos and tacos.

Arroz rojo can be infused with the flavors of tomato and vegetable broth, and further uplifted with the addition of leftover ground beef or chicken mixed in, and can be served as an entire meal in a bowl.

Total time: 30 minutes

Serving: 4 to 5 people

Ingredients:

- 2 cup 80 percent cooked, long-grain rice or red rice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1/2 cup tomato puree
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 1 tsp hot chili sauce
- 1 cup chopped green capsicum, green beans, carrots, green pea, fresh corn
- 1/2 cup small paneer (cottage cheese) cubes
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp chili flakes or oregano
- 1/4 tsp black pepper powder
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- Salt to taste
- Chopped cilantro or spring onion optional

Instructions:

- Heat olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, ginger/garlic paste and cook until the raw onion/garlic smell fades.
- Add tomato puree, tomato paste and cook until the water is absorbed
- Add vegetables, tomato ketchup, hot chili sauce, salt, chili powder, black pepper powder, cumin powder, and water
- Toss in the paneer cubes and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally
- Set aside some of this vegetable broth to serve with the rice.
- Add the rice to the remaining vegetable broth, mix gently
- Cook over medium flame for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally
- Serve hot garnished with cilantro/spring onions.



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



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Embassy of Thailand celebrates National Day



Embassy of Thailand celebrated the country's National Day with a colorful event on 5 December at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, during which the Chargé d'Affaires of the Thai Embassy, Watanachai Narandon highlighted the strong bilateral relations between Thailand and Kuwait.

Noting that the two friendly states established diplomatic relations on 14 June 1963, Mr. Narandon said that next year would mark the milestone 60th anniversary of relations between the two countries.

He added that Thailand and Kuwait enjoy close bilateral relations in all fields, starting from trade, investment, tourism, health care, education, energy and agriculture, to visas and consular issues, referring to the visit of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad to Thailand. Further highlighting that Thailand is among the most visited tourist destinations among Kuwaiti citizens, he indicated that Kuwaitis enjoy Thai culture, food and health care.

For his part, Assistant Foreign Minister

for Economic Affairs, Ambassador Sami Al-Hamad, describing Kuwaiti-Thai relations, said they were historic and distinguished, and that Kuwait enjoys partnerships with Thailand on the commercial, economic and investment levels.

Al-Hamad further added that Kuwait under the directives of Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, is seeking more cooperation with countries, to develop and enhance bilateral relations, and to find investment opportunities, whether for

foreign investors inside Kuwait, or for Kuwaiti investments abroad. He continued, "We have previous agreements with Thailand regarding exemption from double tax fees, and exempting holders of diplomatic and special passports from prior application of visas." In conclusion, the Thai Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires stated that Thailand is a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which unites its 11 member states and promotes cooperation between them.

CBK launches online portal to receive complaints against banks

As part of efforts to provide enhanced and efficacious service, and protect the rights of individual customers, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) last week launched an online portal for customers to lodge complaints and file appeals against services

and activities of local banks. Clarifying the process of filing online complaints, the CBK explained in a statement, that the complaint process begins with filing a complaint against a bank on the designated form available in all banks branches or websites. Once a complaint is received, the bank must provide the customer with a dated copy of the complaint and an acknowledgment of receipt, and must provide a written response to the complaint within 15 business days of its submission.

If the complaint is received via registered mail or electronic mail, the bank must inform the customer in writing through the same channel, or a text message to the customer's phone

number registered with the bank. The new portal is designed only for customers to lodge a complaint, if the concerned bank refuses to provide a complaint form, or to file an appeal if the customer is not satisfied with the response provided by the bank. To file an appeal against a bank's response the customer must also upload copies of all relevant documents related to the appeal, so that the CBK could verify whether the bank had followed proper procedures.

The CBK statement also noted that detailed instructions and guidelines related to filing complaints or appeals are published on its website and social media accounts.



IWG hosts annual Seasonal Dinner

International Women's Group (IWG) held its annual Seasonal Dinner on 4 December at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event was graced by the members of IWG and honored guests, including Sheikha Soad Al Sabah and the Ambassadors of Canada, United Kingdom, France, Indonesia, Guyana and Türkiye.

The event commenced with Ghada Shawky, wife of the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and President of IWG, welcoming the gathering to the celebration of the festive season, adding that this time of the year spreads peace, love and is dedicated to spending time with family and friends.

A video of 'Christmas in Bethlehem' accompanied by the song 'Ya Mariam' performed by Palestinian singer Lina Sleibi from inside the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, was screened by Rima Khalidi, wife of the Palestinian Ambassador.

With the participation of the Embassies of the Republic of Armenia, Kingdom of Eswatini, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Indonesia, and the Indian Anjali school of dance, as well as the Spanish performer Genoveva, traditional dance performances were showcased under the title 'Dances From Around the World'.

The first performance was the Armenian dance 'Mogats Harsner' translated as 'The Brides of Mog', which is an ancient Armenian

province. This was followed by 'Kudigza', a Swazi traditional dance, where its accompanying song welcomes "Gogo" the granny or matriarch, performed by Swazi women. Then, 'Kathak', a semi-classical fusion style dance that originated in North India was showcased, followed by the "Nubian - Aragid" from Egypt. The cultural event closed with an electrifying performance by Genoveva.



In closing Mrs. Shawky thanked the performers and all sponsors for their valuable contribution to add joy during the festive season. Lucky draws and raffles were conducted with special prizes offered by ABYAT, Zain, Best, Excite, Fly Dubai, Pharmazone, Sebamed, Sears, ACE, BSK, Snap Gym, Balsamic, Hassawy and Maria Fuenmaye. The evening ended with a festive dinner prepared by the chefs of the Crowne Plaza.

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France committed to protecting Kuwait

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-French defense cooperation agreement, a media conference was held at the residence of the French Ambassador, H.E. Claire Le Flecher.

In her speech on the occasion, Ambassador Le Flecher confirmed the conclusion of the 'Pearl of the West' exercise, which was part of France's commitment to the defense of Kuwait, and to promote peace in the region.

Pointing out that France and its armed forces are a reliable strategic partner of Kuwait, the ambassador added that France and its allies are committed to not only guarding the borders of NATO, but also that of Kuwait.

Highlighting the quality of French bilateral military relationship, she noted that some of the Kuwaiti officers present at the conference have been trained by France, as part of the 1992 defense agreement, to provide military education and training for 500 officers and soldiers, in addition to planning and implementing seven major military maneuvers.



In turn, Commander of the Indian Ocean Naval Zone and Commander of the French forces stationed in the United Arab Emirates, Admiral Emmanuel Salars, confirmed that his visit to Kuwait comes within the framework of the defense agreement between France and Kuwait.

He pointed out that the Pearl of the West exercises is evidence of France's commitment

to provide security to the region and Kuwait in particular, pointing to their continuous work to combat human trafficking, piracy operations, drug smuggling and weapons from the Bab al-Mandab Strait to the Arabian Gulf.

There are about 13,000 cargo ships that cross the region annually, which means that a ship passes every 15 minutes, and this is part of the

Commander's responsibilities to ensure the smooth flow of international shipping lines. In conclusion, Ambassador Le Flecher stated that she had boarded the French Navy ship Aconit for the launch of the Pearl of the West 2022 exercise, while meeting the men and women who participated in this exceptional exercise that enhanced the military cooperation between France and Kuwait.

MEW outlines specification for EV chargers

Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW), which launched an online service to approve electric vehicle (EV) battery chargers from vendors, has also specified the general requirements for installing electric chargers in various locations across the country, so that these chargers do not negatively impact the electric grid, or

cause damage to the vehicles being charged.

Among the requirements from those wishing to establish EV charging points are that measures should be taken to maintain safe distances so that vehicles coming in for charging do not collide with the charging equipment. The charging points should also be positioned in a well-lit area, and the service provider should provide overhead canopies at the site of the EV recharging point.

Other EV charging point specifications include dimensions of the vehicle chargers so that they do not hinder traffic or the movement of people, particularly the physically challenged. In this regard, the ministry specified that the chargers should be installed on a concrete base of not less than 25 cm high from the surface on



which the charger is to be installed.

The ministry also pointed to the importance of adhering to the general requirements and security and safety instructions of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD)

and the General Directorate of Civil Defense, while not allowing the installation of DC electric chargers in private housing, the agricultural sector, and other buildings during the first phase, and the need for everyone concerned to follow the security and safety standards outlined in the list of electric vehicle chargers by the ministry.

The ministry also warned that if the chargers are installed without the ministry's approval, whoever installed them will be subject to legal accountability, stressing the importance of obtaining the necessary licenses before their installation. The ministry also cautioned vendors against using these chargers, or reselling the electricity provided at a subsidized rate to these EV charging points, for commercial purposes other than what it was intended for in the license.

Box Hill College Kuwait

International Day, an event which arms the students with knowledge about the world heritage, civilizations, and diverse cultures



Under the patronage of H.E. Melissa Kelly, the Australian ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Box Hill College organized the International Day on Monday, December 5th, 2022. The purpose of the event was to shed light on culture, education, and promote cultural literacy and diversity. The event was inline with Box Hill's plan to start the International Business degree program soon.

The event was attended by their excellencies the Australian, Turkish, Mexican, and Palestinian ambassadors, H.E. James Holtsinger the chargé d'affaires at the US embassy, and H.E. Tomás Berrocal the Acting Head of Mission at the Peruvian embassy. In addition, the event was attended by the chairmen of the American and Portuguese Business Councils in Kuwait, leaders from international organizations operating in Kuwait, and Box Hill students and alumni.

After opening the event, H.E. the Australian ambassador delivered a talk about Australian culture, diversity, and education in which she highlighted the significant role Box Hill

and similar international Australian high quality education provider play worldwide in bridging the gap in the education market by offering hands on experience in various fields of studies. H.E. emphasized on the Australian embassy's commitment to support all efforts made by the Australian academic institutions and businesses. She thanked Box Hill College for providing such opportunities for students to acquire knowledge necessary to navigate through the business world and international

markets successfully.

Their excellencies the ambassadors, the guests, faculty members and the students visited the booths of the participating embassies in which they had tastes of different cuisines, beverages, exquisite arts and artifacts, traditional costumes and instruments, brochures and videos about education and tourism. Next, they visited the art exhibition organized by Box Hill Interior and graphic design students and supervised by faculty members Abeer Al-

Ajmi, Alaa Khalif, Laila Al-Ali, Hajar Ramadan, Jumana Alobaid and Maryam Al-Kandari.

Dr. Arezou Harraf, the Head of Business School thanked on behalf of Dr. Abdulrahman AlShaiji and Dr. Ali Arifa the patron of the event and their excellencies the ambassadors of the participating countries for all the rich contribution which offered a window of opportunity for the visitors of the event exhibition to learn more about the history, culture, and prominent educational institution in countries contributed to humanity and world heritage.

The lecturer of International Business in the School of Business Studies and the organizer of the event, Bassem Alkassam commented that such events are needed in today's global village to equip the new generation with the necessary skills and knowledge required to work happily and successfully with the diverse workforce. He stressed that embarking on such abilities paves the way for more effective graduates who can fill the gap in the marketplace.





Dr. Samia Alduaij



Noura Al Fadli



Lina Al Shatti

Hague Talks event sheds light on women's role in protecting environment

STAFF REPORT

Hague Talks held its third event at the Ktech College Auditorium last week to discuss the role of women in the private sector to protect the environment. The illuminating talk saw three inspirational Kuwaiti women speak on the topic and share their experiences in environmental issues.

Atyab Alshatti, a lawyer, a columnist, and an author who dedicates her experiences to empower women, moderated the Talks giving momentum to the speakers who made some excellent cases of the role of women in protecting the environment and proving that climate justice could not exist without gender equality since climate change was disproportionately affecting women and girls.

Laurens Westhoff the ambassador of Netherlands, Aliya Mawani, Ambassador of Canada, and Support Non-Profit representative Abdulhakim were also present at the event.

Opening the talks the first guest speaker Noura Al Fadli an electrical engineer armed with an MSc degree in environmental impact and working in the private sector, spoke eloquently on her passion about the environment and the urgent need to act in tackling local environment issues for the sake



of the future generations. Noura, an exceptional Kuwait youth, has been advocating environmental justice and women rights for over 5 years.

For the next speaker Samia Alduaij, environment was not just a passion, but her connection to the sea and land went back all the way to her childhood, where she witnessed her father who was a pearl diver and thrived off the sea.

With such a diverse background Saima was empowered to create an optimistic future for the environment of Kuwait through her initiative and endeavors. Having created a local initiative that raised awareness of the environmental impact of sustainable consumption Samia along with her



Atyab Alshatti with Netherlands and Canadian ambassadors

partner in passion Hawazen is helping put together a better practice towards the environment.

Her outstanding contribution and personality was well reflected as she spoke about her activism, passion, dreams, and achievements, from the rich background she inherited from her father to the future of Kuwait's environment.

The final speaker of the afternoon was Dr Lina Al Shatti whose role as a Senior Engineer in Projects Division at the Kuwait Oil Company allowed her to speak extensively on KOC's initiative in environment protection and preventing pollution at various levels of the organization.

A very enlightened question answer session



followed with audience engagement and discussion on the topic.

The event not only raised awareness on the subject of women empowerment in environment protection but also recognizing the right of women to protect nature as one of the most significant cases in recent decades.

The Hague Talk event was held as part of the series of events held all over Kuwait to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence and to promote the full and effective participation of women in achieving environmental sustainability in a way that contributes to respect for women, their knowledge, capabilities and rights.

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Around 20,000 seats from the upper tiers will be donated to countries in need of sporting infrastructure after the World Cup. During legacy mode, the stadium will become a sporting hub and the home of Al Rayyan Sports Club — one of Qatar's most popular teams.



(top 5 nationalities):

- **100,000** KSA
- **64,000** India
- **40,000** USA
- **33,000** UK
- **26,000** Mexico



*This Schedule
representing
up to Friday,
09 December 2022.*

Budget shortfalls lead to medicine shortages



An acute shortage of several essential medicines at the Ministry of Health (MoH) has left many patients without access to their essential medication. The situation has gone from bad to worse so much so that several members in parliament have threatened to grill the minister of health on the issue, unless urgent remedial measures are implemented to make available the necessary medications and alleviate the suffering of patients.

Severe shortage of some vital medicines that are prescribed to patients on a daily basis, and which threatens health and the exacerbation of illness among patients, has led to some citizens resorting to buying medicines online from the private sector, or even ordering them from neighboring countries.

Shortcomings in the health ministry's annual budget allocations for medicines have been blamed for the shortage in medicines and the current medical fiasco. Sources at the ministry note that the KD520 million allocated for medicines in the MoH budget for 2021-22 were used to pay previous invoices for medicines supplied by local and international companies. This has created a situation where funds are not available to purchase new medicines for the current year.

Experts estimate that the ministry requires an urgent addition of around KD250 million to tide over the current medicine crunch. They note that although provisions in the annual MoH budget for medications were raised by KD30 million from the previous year's budget, this did not take into account the increase in population, the launch of new hospitals and health centers, or the relatively small quantities of essential medicines that are allocated to Kuwait by international vendors, all of which have now contributed to creating the current situation.

In addition, several challenges that private firms face in importing and distributing medicines have exacerbated the drug shortage facing the country. These obstacles include among others, the increase in transportation costs and the higher price of

medicines on the global market, the long documentation cycles in obtaining approval from the regulators in Kuwait before being able to import new medicines, as well as the delay in payment of invoices by the health ministry to vendors and distributors of medicines. The ministry is said to be unwilling and unable to pay vendor invoices because the prices were higher than what was approved by the ministry.

Experts say that the solution to the current shortage in medicines is for the Ministry of Finance to urgently allocate emergency funding to MoH. On the longer term, the annual budget for medications will have to be increased, the storage space in the Central pharmaceutical stores in Sabhan will need to be expanded, and new medical

warehouses will need to be built in each of the six governorates to ensure that if the central warehouse in Sabhan is damaged, urgent medical supplies to the country will not be affected.

Health experts add that the health ministry needs to keep pace with legal legislation in the global pharmaceutical sector, and speed up the documentation cycle for drug approvals, in addition to paying local and international medicine vendors on time, and ensuring sufficient medicines are available to overcome crises and emergencies. In the longer term, they also suggest that Kuwait should study the prospect of opening its own pharmaceutical manufacturing units locally so as to achieve self-sufficiency, at least in essential medications.

ALSAYER unveils All New Toyota GR86 coupe 2023



Sports car enthusiasts in Kuwait can look forward to an exciting addition to Toyota's GR collection as Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons EST. Co. launched the all-new Toyota GR86 during the Gulf Run Grand Prix held in Kuwait Motor Town recently.

The sleek and stylish coupe provides an entry point to Toyota's GR range, bringing the rewards of sports-focused handling and performance to a wider audience.



The new GR86 is an evolution of the previous GT86; the model launched a decade ago that signaled Toyota's renewed commitment to sports car engineering. The coupe retains the classic configuration of a front-mounted engine with rear-wheel drive and is designed to spread the joy of a fun driving experience, while inheriting the culture of the previous model.

Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "We are very excited to bring the new GR86 to our customers in the Middle East. Designed for enthusiasts by enthusiasts, the latest addition to our GR range offers true sports car performance with a

focus on added stability, power, and improved aerodynamics.

The overall dimensions of the new GR86 are close to those of its predecessor, yet, the height has been lowered by 10 mm to 1,310 mm, while 5 mm has been added taking the wheelbase to 2,575 mm.

With its wide stance, the rear-wheel-drive coupe's handling changes come in the form of front and rear-frame reinforcements that increase rigidity. Functional exterior air vents were also added to further support steering stability. In addition, weight-shaving details, such as aluminum roof panels and fenders, ensure a nimble curb weight of just over 1,270 kg. The 2.4L naturally aspirated, horizontally opposed four-cylinder boxer engine brings a significant power upgrade relative to its predecessor, increasing from 205 to 233 hp and 212 to 250 nm of torque. With a 6-speed manual (MT) or automatic transmission (AT), the bigger engine also improves zero-to-60 times, going from 7.0 to 6.3 seconds for the MT and from 8.0 to 6.9 seconds for the AT.

The 2023 GR86's driver-focused cockpit is designed to elevate the daily driving experience while also offering a simplicity that keeps drivers squarely focused on the road. And, as with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the new GR86. The vehicle comes equipped with a comprehensive array of safety features, such as seven SRS airbags (including driver's knee airbag),

The new GR86 offers a sporty look and allows customers to express their individuality with a choice of seven distinctive exterior colors, and an interior available in black or black and GR Red.

Al Muzaini Exchange offers Bharat Bill Pay service for Indians



Al Muzaini Exchange Co., the number one money exchange company in Kuwait with more than 80 years of being the most trusted company for conducting foreign exchange and money transfers is proud to announce that for the first time in Kuwait, pay your bills in India anytime and from anywhere via Bharat Bill Pay service. Bills in India can be paid conveniently, reliably and safely. Customers simply need to visit any one of Al Muzaini's 126 branches and request for the payment of their bills in India via the new service. Pay your electricity bills, water bills, gas bills, education fees and various other bills in India utilizing this new and efficient service.

Hugh Fernandes, General Manager of Al Muzaini said "We are proud to be the first exchange house to provide all Indians living in Kuwait the possibility of making various bill payments in India through Bharat BillPay service. It is an extremely proud moment for us to launch a service that eases the struggles that many of our customers might be facing and to offer them a safe and reliable method to make bill payments back home. Making cross-border bill payments accessible is another step in the right direction."

Noopur Chaturvedi, CEO of NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd, commenting on the first in market launch

said "BBPS, in its role as a one-stop Bill payment platform in an interoperable and accessible manner, continues to make the Bill payment services available to all the Indians, including those that reside outside the country. We thank RBI for their approval and support for expanding the certainty, reliability and safety of BBPS across borders, as we take 'Cross Border Bill Payments' live in Kuwait. This facility will go a long way in empowering the Non Resident Indians (NRIs) in this country to make bill Payments for their families in India. We congratulate Al-Muzaini exchange on being the first in Kuwait to make cross-border bill payments live through the Bharat BillPay ecosystem."

One can easily transfer money to any bank in India within minutes at competitive rates from any of the Al Muzaini branches and self-service kiosks. One can also send money online or using the Al Muzaini app 24x7.

Al Muzaini was the first exchange house in Kuwait to launch UPI payment services made available to all Indian nationals living in Kuwait and continuously associates with the best and most convenient services to ensure that it always provides the best customer experience.

The Bharat BillPay service is available in all Al Muzaini branches.

Nepal marks 50th anniversary of relations with Kuwait

Ambassador of Nepal H.E. Durga Prasad Bhandari, hosted a reception to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Kuwait. Speaking during the event, he highlighted the development of bilateral relations between the two countries over the past fifty years.



He noted that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, several major projects in Nepal have been funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, within the framework of soft loan arrangements. The ambassador added

that these projects were mainly in the energy and agriculture sectors. For his part, Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, Sami Al-Hamad, who was the chief guest on the occasion, praised the Kuwaiti-Nepalese relations, pointing to the desire of both sides to develop them, as there are discussions between officials of the two countries in this regard. He added that the Nepalese community in Kuwait is diverse and contributes to the country's development.



Ambassador Bhandari in his speech also highlighted that Kuwait remains an important destination for Nepalese migrant workers, and that while contributing to the economy of Kuwait and Nepal, the workers also help strengthen friendly relations with Kuwait at the grassroots level.

Referring to the new development in the field of air transport between Nepal and Kuwait in 2022, the ambassador said that two important cities in Nepal are now connected to Kuwait City with direct flights, operated by



different airlines.

He added that Jazeera Airways started direct flights from Kuwait International Airport to Gautam Buddha International Airport in the Nepalese city of Bhairahawa in May 2022, while the Nepalese Himalaya Airlines started a direct flight between Kathmandu and Kuwait in July this year, indicating that these new developments in the Civil aviation sector will further contribute to strengthening relations in the field of trade, travel and tourism between the two countries.



ICSG meet Indian Ambassador

Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) was delighted to meet Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika at his office recently. During the meeting Ambassador thanked ICSG for supporting

Indian Embassy's various community initiatives. ICSG also extended their full cooperation and support to Ambassador Swaika to support all community welfare endeavours.

Al Muzaini announces "Foreign Currency Delivery Service"

Al Muzaini Exchange Co., the leading money exchange company with more than 80 years of experience in Kuwait takes immense pleasure in announcing the launch of its new service, "Foreign Currency delivery service".

Understanding that the customer's time is extremely valuable and precious, customers can now order foreign currency bank notes easily and conveniently, either online or via the Al Muzaini application. One can simply select their preferred foreign currency and choose the time slot wherein they want to receive the order and it will be delivered to their doorstep safely and securely within hours.

Al Muzaini Exchange constantly works on



bringing new, innovative and unique services to its valued customers to ensure that they always receive the best possible customer experience.

FAIPS holds annual day function for first graders



After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Grade 1 children of FAIPS-DPS celebrated their Annual Day on 24 November. Titled 'Reach for the stars', the visual extravaganza showcased the talents of 545 participants and highlighted the school's vision of overall development.

The Principal Ravi Ayanoli addressed the gathering and welcomed the chief guests, Research Scientist at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Dr. Jaffer Ali Parol, and the Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, Reaven D'souza. Regional Director and Partner of Grand Hypermarket chain, Ayyoob Kachery, Group Sales Manager at Alshaya Group Abdulkadir



Al-Machhour, and Inspector at the Ministry of Education, Noura Alajmi, graced the occasion with their esteemed presence.

In rich costumes and gripping dialogues, the little children amazed the audience with their compering skills, even as with vibrant colors and

rhythmic steps, the kids showcased glimpses of cultural richness of India. The little singers then enthralled the audience with their impeccable rendition of songs. Emphasizing the importance of exercise and fitness, the children put up a spectacular performance of their Zumba and

acrobatic skills. While the Arabic dance was a flamboyant crowd-pleaser, the parents also joined in for some foot-tapping disco numbers.

The children wrapped up the performances by reminding the audience to keep their eyes on the stars and feet on the ground. The program ended with the chief guests addressing the gathering and encouraging the children to be compassionate and empathetic in their journey ahead. Headmistress Seema Bhatnagar then called on stage all the teachers who put their heart and soul into making the program a grand success, and thanked each of them personally for their involvement and support.

Jindal Shadeed Group to Invest USD 3 billion in Oman

Jindal Shadeed Group, a pioneer in the steel industry, announced that it has selected the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in the Sultanate of Oman to establish a manufacturing facility. Slated to be the largest of its kind within the zone to produce green steel, the factory will also utilize renewable energy sources in its manufacturing operations.

This announcement was made at a ceremony that included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and a land allocation agreement. The event was held under the auspices of His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and included the presence of a number of high-ranking government and private sector officials as well as prominent local and international media.

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is the largest economic zone in the Middle East, with an area of 2,000 square kilometers. This strategic project is being built over an area estimated at approximately 2 square kilometers in the concession zone at the Port of Duqm with an investment value estimated at 3 billion USD.

The MoU was signed by His Excellency Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, and Harsha Shetty, CEO of Jindal Shadeed Group. The land reservation agreement was signed by the Jindal Shadeed Group and Mr. Reggy Vermeulen, Chief Executive Officer of Port of Duqm.

In line with its development efforts, Jindal Shadeed Group also signed an MoU with the centralised utility provider, Marafiq, to provide the plant with the utilities necessary to operate the project such as water services, seawater for cooling purposes, and other Marafiq services. The agreement was signed by Talal Al Lawati, Vice President of Commercial Operations, Marafiq.



Commenting on the series of agreements, His Excellency Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb expressed his delight in partnering with steel production expert, Jindal Shadeed Group, to develop its manufacturing facility. He reaffirmed that a project of this caliber would be an added value to the heavy industries cluster in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and would play a vital role in the development of Duqm as a key industrial hub.

He added, "The signing of the MoU and agreement is a testament to the importance of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and further reinstates its position as a leading and attractive destination for large strategic projects that will benefit from renewable energy and green hydrogen. The availability of solar energy and wind resources throughout the year will encourage more investments in green industries and renewable energy projects in the Sultanate of Oman in general, and Duqm in particular. The Sultanate of Oman is making commendable efforts toward using cleaner sources of energy to meet industrial requirements. The efforts are in line with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 to use alternative energy and sustainable

natural resources. The project also serves the comprehensive national strategy which focuses on reducing emissions and achieving carbon neutrality."

Adding to this, Harsha Shetty said, "Jindal Shadeed Group is investing more than 3 billion USD to develop this mega steel project in Duqm, and we have already obtained the necessary approvals to secure the land for our Green Hydrogen ready steel project. Our goal is to produce 5 million metric tons of green steel on an annual basis that will create over \$800M per annum in country value addition.

The plant will supply high quality steel products to automobile, wind energy and consumer durables sector amongst others. There is a booming demand for green steel from ESG conscious customers around the world especially in Europe and Asia, who have already committed significant reduction in Scope 3 emissions by 2030.

Reggy Vermeulen added, "This is a great step for all of us, and we are thrilled to see such a project happen in Port of Duqm - a successful pairing of Jindal Shadeed Group's expertise in steel production and Port of Duqm's logistical prowess. This green steel project aligns very well with Port



of Duqm's vision to be a green port operating on sustainable and renewable energy sources in line with the Oman vision 2040 to support economic diversification and reduce reliance on the oil and gas sector.

This huge project will not only attract foreign investment but also provide work opportunities for local talent. I would also extend my gratitude to the board of directors for their unending support, and for paving the path for us to attract projects of this scale and implications to Port of Duqm. We are confident that we will benefit from the continuous support of all parties who are committed to making this project a success."

Talal bin Muhammad Jawad Al Lawati of the Central Services Company also commented saying, "We, at Marafiq Company, are pleased to provide the necessary water services for this vital and important project which will undoubtedly enhance the use of clean energy and green hydrogen in the Special Economic Zone in Duqm. We will ensure that all processes are in place to meet the evolving needs of the project while reinstating our commitment to contributing to other new developmental ventures as well."

Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

continued to be a problem in corruption cases, and that there were several reports of abuse by the state's security apparatuses, the authorities had prosecuted and punished officials proven to be involved in abuses or corruption, whether in the security services or in other government agencies.

Continuing the constructive criticism of Kuwait's human rights record, the US State Department pointed out that infringements on freedom of expression, discrimination against women's rights, and gender-orientation, continued unabated, and that the 'kafala' or sponsorship system blamed for abuses of workers rights, and for fostering human trafficking and visa trading activities remained unchanged.

The report also noted that discriminations against the so-called 'stateless' bedouins still persisted. The Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents, the public entity in charge of bedouin affairs, has been accused of dragging its feet in the process of verifying and evaluating applications for citizenship. Moreover, the process of determining applicants' eligibility for services and whether they hold another nationality remains opaque.

Meanwhile, the Delegation of the European Union to Kuwait (DEUK) — the diplomatic mission responsible for the European Union's political and economic relations with Kuwait — in its own report on human rights in Kuwait in 2021 reiterated the views expressed by the US State Department. The EU report noted that while Kuwait achieved some progress on human rights in 2021, the political impasse prevailing during the year hampered and delayed human rights reforms in the country.

The report added that despite having a relatively open media by regional standards, and the media regularly publishing or airing comments critical of government policies and activities, the scope for expressing dissenting views in Kuwait shrank, with tightening of the

state's control over media outlets. The 2015 Cybercrime Law expanded these restrictions to cover postings on social media platforms that were deemed offensive of the Amir, neighboring countries or Islam. The authorities have also used penal code provisions to prosecute activists.

Discrimination against women, and violence against women and girls, continued to remain a social phenomena that had not been curbed. In 2019, the international non-governmental group Human Rights Watch spoke to women survivors of domestic violence in Kuwait who explained barriers to seeking protection from the authorities, including cases where police did not respond to their appeals or attempted to send them back to their abusers. Discriminatory divorce laws also mean that it can take years for women to obtain a divorce even when they have faced abuse.

In September 2020, after years of activism and social pressure by women and other civil society organizations, Kuwait enacted a new 'Law on Protection from Domestic Violence'. The law calls for the creation of a national committee, comprising representatives from different ministries and civil society, and tasked with drawing up policies to combat and protect women from domestic violence. The legislation also urges the establishment of shelters for victims of domestic abuse and a hotline to receive domestic violence complaints, as well as provide counseling and legal assistance for victims.

The new law also enables legal authorities to issue restraining orders to prevent abusers from contacting their victim. However, the new law has several legal lacunae. For example, while the law provides penalties for violating restraining orders, it does not set out penalties for domestic violence as a crime on its own. It also does not include former partners or people engaged in relationships outside of wedlock, including those engaged to be married or in unofficial marriages.

Women also continued to face discrimination regarding inheritance, marriage, child custody, and their inability to pass on their citizenship

to their children. The lack of adequate women's representation in parliament has remained a challenge. Despite more women winning seats to the National Assembly in the recent election, entrenched conservatism in society that discriminates against women has prevented their due representations in decision-making bodies.

The EU report added that migrant workers, who make up around two-thirds of the population, continued to face difficulties and legal constraints. This, the delegation found, was largely due to the prevailing kafala (sponsorship) system, which bound foreign nationals to their employer and opened the doors to further abuses. The report also recognized increased hostility toward expatriate communities from the local population — particularly during the spread of COVID-19 and the societal tension brought about by the pandemic.

Despite the adoption of new legislation improving the situation of migrant workers, working conditions of domestic workers and undocumented migrants often remain difficult. Human Rights Watch, during a visit to Kuwait in 2019, found that despite the protections provided under the 2015 domestic workers law, migrant domestic workers continued to face exploitation, forced confinement to their employers' houses, and physical and sexual abuse. The report acknowledged that the Kuwaiti authorities have work to do to address the scourge of human trafficking and implement equal labor laws for expatriate workers.

Turning to the ongoing plight of the bedouin people in Kuwait, the EU delegation reported that this segment of the population continued to face difficulty in obtaining identification documents, resulting in problems to access public services such as health, education and employment, or even to travel outside of the country. The temporary committee on 'Stateless affairs', which was tasked to complete a draft law on their civil and social rights, has not been formed in the new National Assembly formed post-October 2021.

The human rights shortcomings highlighted in the US report, and similar human rights infringements noted by the EU delegation are nothing new. Most of these allegations have been leveled against Kuwait over the years by other international human rights activists and institutions, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

These reports also dovetail with similar reports by local entities such as the Kuwait Society for Human Rights — a non-governmental organization that aims to protect and promote human rights in Kuwait, and by the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee, which has frequently criticized the country's security apparatuses for its complicity in human trafficking, and its complacency in monitoring, safeguarding and responding to human rights violations. However, as one commentator put it, the fact that civil society organizations and parliamentary watchdogs like the Human Rights Committee can report these violations bodes well for the future of human rights in Kuwait.

Transparency and behind the scenes pressure from key partners are also needed to encourage human rights reforms in Kuwait. Reports of human rights violations have often spurred legislative and legal changes, as well as brought about normative changes in society. In this regard, the decision by Kuwait's Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) last week to remain committed to bolstering transparency and fairness, and implementing the 2022-26 government program that aims to set legislation and intensify auditing and anti-corruption efforts, is certainly encouraging.

If anything, the critical reports by the US and the EU highlight the importance of mainstreaming human rights in the government's policies and initiatives, including in the country's strategic New Kuwait development plan, so as to ensure dignity, freedom and justice for all people in Kuwait.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Eco-Economic Development



David Malpass
President of the World Bank Group.



The Earth's biodiversity and the services provided by healthy ecosystems are under massive pressure from climate change and the challenge of supporting eight billion people in a sustainable way. Key ecosystem services, such as timber from forests, pollinators, and ocean fishing, must be conserved and cherished, yet they are being rapidly eroded. The 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal this month offers a chance to build on humanity's shared vision of living in harmony with nature.

Biodiversity is an important goal for World Bank Group programs. But to reverse its loss, economic decisions must take nature into account. That is why we are working to help countries integrate nature into their economic growth models, development plans, and climate agendas. Doing so means establishing policies that consider nature's real economic value, building institutions that support nature, developing public-private partnerships to support that goal, and mobilizing finance from all sources to transform economies and policies — going well beyond isolated interventions.

Fishing is a good example of why nature matters for growth and development. Globally, fish stocks are declining, owing to the triple threat of climate change, overfishing, and pollution. If business as usual continues, the world could lose up to 25 percent of fish catches by the end of the century. That should concern everyone, for several reasons.

change, many fishers will be forced to travel farther to catch them, to change the way they fish, or to find new jobs. Many will not be able to adapt. Among the 38 million people globally who are employed directly in fishing, the most vulnerable will be the hardest hit. This includes small-scale fishing communities, which are often located in remote areas that are already disproportionately affected by climate change. Women, who make up 50 percent of employees in the broader aquatic-food value chain, will also be significantly affected. For those with little formal education, alternative livelihoods will be hard to find.

Third, the impact of these threats will grow over time. Fish stocks do not respect international boundaries. Without the right regulations and incentives, fleets will continue to maximize their catches in the short term, with major economies overfishing far beyond their territorial waters. If all countries do this, a bad problem will become much worse. Fifty years ago, about 10 percent of global fish stocks were being fished at biologically unsustainable levels, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. Today, that figure has risen to 35 percent. While many countries will suffer, the poorest communities stand to lose the most.

Faced with these challenges, conservation efforts that merely stop nature loss are no longer enough. Rather, we need to reverse the decline, which means changing how we produce and consume.

One approach is to invest in nature-based solutions that protect nature while also supporting economic development, creating livelihoods, and helping countries mitigate and adapt to climate change. Consider mangroves, which are rich in biodiversity, act as nursery areas for fish, protect more than six million people from annual flooding, and absorb carbon emissions. They are estimated to have an economic wealth valued at \$550 billion. Another example is seaweed farming, which has the potential to create jobs, alleviate food insecurity, and absorb carbon.

The World Bank Group is working across many fronts to help countries recognize both the value of nature and the risks that would follow from losing it. Often working through ministries of finance, we provide funding, knowledge, policy advice, and technical capacity to mobilize partners behind nature-based solutions. With our support, countries are identifying promising new interventions that can be replicated and scaled up.

For example, by involving different stakeholders in marine planning, Vietnam is reducing conflicts over resource use across sectors. In China, we're working with the Chongqing and Ningbo municipalities to

reduce the amount of marine plastic that reaches the ocean from river effluent, building on earlier projects that helped establish China's water-treatment capacity. By applying technologies like satellites and drones, we are helping Tanzania and other countries obtain real-time data on coastal and marine degradation, so that they can act to prevent it. And through innovative financial instruments such as blue carbon credits, Ghana aims to

restore 3,000 hectares of mangroves and bring in more private funding.

We are working to expand efforts like these. Near-term goals include more financing for projects in poor countries, a bigger role for the private sector, and coordinated action from local communities to national governments. But if we are going to stop biodiversity loss, much more needs to be done, both by us and the global community.

“

The World Bank Group is helping countries recognize the value of nature and risks from losing it. We provide funding, knowledge, policy advice, and technical capacity to mobilize partners behind nature-based solutions.

”

First, we are already facing one of the largest food-security crises in modern history. Since fish are an important dietary component for 3.3 billion people, a reduced supply will exacerbate food crises now and in the future. Fish are rich in nutrients that are particularly important for child development, and they are an especially valued source of protein for the poor, because they are easier to obtain and cheaper to preserve than other sources. Hence, fish contribute 50 percent or more of the total animal-protein intake in Ghana, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone. Moreover, a fish shortage will affect the entire food chain, because fish products are important components of other foods, including livestock feeds.

Second, as fish become scarcer or migrate to colder and deeper waters because of climate

BEFORE YOU SHARE, THINK:

- WHO made it?
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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Ending the Austerity Pandemic



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The world is confronting multiple, compounding crises, from COVID-19, energy, inflation, debt, and climate shocks to unaffordable living costs and political instability. The need for ambitious action cannot be greater. However, the return of failed policies such as austerity, now called 'fiscal restraint' or 'fiscal consolidation', and a lack of effective taxation and debt-reduction initiatives threaten to exacerbate the macroeconomic instability and daily hardships that billions of people are facing. Unless policymakers change course, an 'austerity pandemic' will make global economic recovery even more difficult.

As we show in a recent report, the looming wave of austerity will be even more premature and severe than the one that followed the 2008 global financial crisis. An analysis of IMF expenditure projections indicates that 143 governments will cut spending (as a share of GDP) in 2023, affecting more than 6.7 billion people — or 85 percent of the world population. In fact, most governments started scaling back public spending in 2021, and the number of countries

slashing budgets is expected to rise through 2025. With average spending cuts of 3.5 percent of GDP in 2021, this contraction has already been much bigger than in earlier shocks.

Even more worryingly, upwards of 50 countries are adopting excessive cuts, meaning their spending has fallen below their (already low) pre-pandemic levels. This cohort contains many countries, including Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guyana, Liberia, Libya, Sudan, Suriname, and Yemen, with large unmet development needs.

The austerity measures that governments are considering or already implementing will be deeply harmful to their populations, and

regressive sales and value-added taxes (VAT), strengthening public-private partnerships, and increasing fees for public services.

Just in eastern and southern Africa, UNICEF finds that Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, and South Africa are considering or implementing three categories of austerity measures, while Lesotho is pursuing four categories, and Botswana five. Botswana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia are each applying four or more categories of measures to boost revenue. Including spending cuts and tax increases, Botswana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Zambia are each considering at least

\$5.50 per day. And, lest we forget, trillions of dollars have been mobilized since the start of the pandemic to support corporations, while ordinary people have borne many of the costs of adjustment.

The dangers of an aggressive austerity approach were made clear over the past decade. From 2010 to 2019, billions of lives were upended by cuts to pensions and social benefits; lower investments in programs for women, children, and the elderly; fewer and lower-paid teachers, health, and local civil servants; and higher prices from basic consumption taxes.

It does not have to be this way. There are alternatives to austerity. Even in the poorest countries, there are at least nine other financing options that some governments have been using for years, and that are fully endorsed by the United Nations and international financial institutions. These include progressive taxation; debt elimination or restructuring; clamping down on illicit financial flows; increasing employers' social-security contributions and coverage by formalizing workers in the informal economy; using fiscal and foreign-exchange reserves; re-allocating public expenditures; adopting a more accommodating macroeconomic framework; securing official development assistance; and new allocations of the IMF's reserve asset, special drawing rights.

Since fiscal decisions affect everyone, they should be made not behind closed doors, but through inclusive and transparent national dialogues that include trade unions, employer federations, and civil-society organizations. Governments must abandon austerity measures that benefit the few at the expense of the many. Only by exploring alternative approaches can we support people and get back on track to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The world is still suffering from one kind of pandemic. There is no need for another.

“Unless austerity is reversed, people in developing countries will lose social protections and public services just when they are most needed. According to Oxfam, almost half of the global population is already living on less than \$5.50 per day.”

especially to women. Governments are planning to limit social protections for vulnerable populations; cut programs for families, the elderly, and people with disabilities; slash or cap the public-sector wage bill (implying a reduction of frontline workers like teachers and health personnel); eliminate subsidies; privatize transportation, energy, and water services; cut pension benefits; reduce labor protections and employers' social-security contributions; and decrease health expenditures.

In parallel, many governments are adopting short-term revenue-generation strategies that will also have detrimental social effects. These include increasing consumption taxes, such as

seven categories of austerity measures that are known to have adverse social impacts.

Not only are these governments pursuing painful austerity at a time when the region is dealing with unprecedented droughts and a cost-of-living crisis. They also are showing little willingness to adopt policies, such as higher tax rates for corporations and wealthy individuals, that are critical to reducing their already-high levels of inequality.

Unless austerity is reversed, people in developing countries will lose social protections and public services just when they are most needed. According to Oxfam, almost half of the global population is already living on less than



Importance of protein in building muscle

Proteins are large, complex molecules comprising of hundreds or thousands of smaller units called amino acids, which are attached to one another in long chains. Proteins do most of the work in cells and are required for the structure, function, and regulation of the body's tissues and organs. Proteins differ from one another primarily in their sequence of amino acids, which is dictated by the nucleotide sequence of their genes, and which usually results in protein folding into a specific three-dimensional (3D) structure that determines its activity.

There are 20 different types of amino acids that can be combined to make a protein. While some can be synthesized by the human body, others cannot. The nine amino acids that the body cannot make are called essential amino acids. These must be obtained through diet.

When a person eats protein, it is digested and broken down into amino acids, which are involved in many processes in the body, including tissue growth and repair, immune function, and energy production. Once formed, proteins only exist for a certain period and are then degraded and recycled by the cell's machinery through the process of protein turnover. A protein's lifespan is measured in terms of its half-life and covers a wide range. They can exist for minutes or years with an average lifespan of 1-2 days in mammalian cells.

Like other body tissues, muscle proteins are continuously broken down and rebuilt.



In order to build muscle, a person must consume more protein than what is broken down. This is often referred to as a net positive nitrogen balance, as protein is high in nitrogen.

If a person is not consuming adequate amounts of protein, their body tends to break down muscle to provide the body with the amino acids needed to support body functions and preserve more important tissues. Over time, this can lead to decreased muscle mass and strength. Additionally, the body uses amino acids for muscle protein synthesis (MPS), the primary driver of muscle repair, recovery, and growth after strenuous exercises.

According to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, most healthy adults over 19 years old should get between 10 to 35 percent of their daily calories from protein. One gram of protein provides 4

calories. This means that a person who eats 2,000 calories per day would need to consume between 50 and 175 grams of protein per day.

The current Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of 0.8 g per kg of body weight for protein is based on the amount required to maintain nitrogen balance and prevent muscle loss. However, extending these recommendations to active individuals who are looking to build muscle may not be appropriate.

When it comes to building muscle mass, the ideal amount of daily protein a person should consume depends on several factors, including age, gender, activity level, health, and others. Nevertheless, previous studies have given us a good idea of how to calculate the amount of protein adults need for muscle gain based on body weight. While most

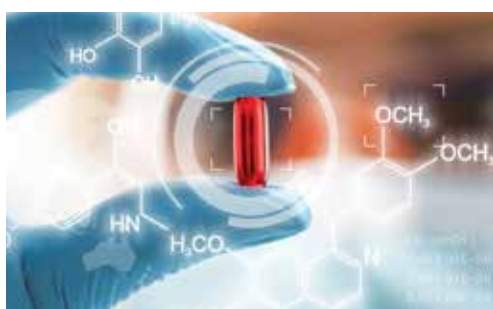
studies agree that higher protein intakes are associated with improvements in lean body mass and strength when combined with resistance training, the optimal amount of protein required to build muscle remains controversial.

One 2020 meta-analysis found that protein intakes ranging from 0.5 to 3.5 g per kg of body weight can support increases in lean body mass. In particular, researchers noted that gradually increasing protein intake, even by as little as 0.1 grams per kilogram of body weight per day, can help maintain or increase muscle mass.

While it is difficult to give exact figures due to varying study results, the optimum amount of protein for muscle-building appears to be between 1.2 and 1.6 g per kg of body weight. Although the rate of increase in lean body mass from higher protein intakes rapidly decreased after 1.3 g per kg of body weight was exceeded, strength training was found to suppress this decline. This suggests that increased protein intake paired with strength training is best for gaining lean body mass.

For example, this means a 80 kg male would need to consume between 98 and 131 g of protein daily, combined with resistance training, to support muscle growth. A person can meet their daily protein needs by eating animal and plant-based protein sources. However, most research suggests that eating more than 2 g of protein per kg of body weight per day can cause health issues over time.

Pharmacogenesis, future of personalized health



Two people with the same symptoms of illness may be prescribed the same drug as treatment, but one may respond better or worse than another because of their unique genetic makeup.

Pharmacogenomics, which is a rapidly growing field of study, deals with the simultaneous impact of multiple mutations in the genome that may determine the patient's response to drug therapy. It seeks to identify genetic markers that predict the metabolism and elimination of prescription medications, and can help doctors and scientists to better understand why some people develop side effects from drugs while others do not.

As pharmacogenomics advances it can lead to safer and more effective drug therapies, eliminate trial and error when it comes to delivering therapeutic solutions, and reduce healthcare costs for patients. A better understanding of pharmacogenomics will also allow doctors and patients to take more personalized approaches to treatment and recovery.

A person's genetic makeup can have a profound impact on the way their body responds to drugs. This is one reason why getting a genetic test, before starting treatment

with a new medication or undergoing surgery, is now increasingly being considered essential by doctors. This will allow medical personnel to understand whether specific genes may predispose the patient to certain side effects or other complications from taking specific medications.

Metabolism is the process by which the body transforms calories from food and drinks into energy. All chemical reactions that occur in living organisms, from digestion to the transport of substances from cell to cell, can be part of metabolism.

Some people find that their body is unable to metabolize, or process certain medications or drugs as efficiently as others, especially if they are taking multiple medications that can have an impact on each other.

The good news is that there are ways for you to adjust your dosage based on how your liver processes each medication. The liver is responsible for metabolizing most drugs in the body and helps break down some of them into the active chemical ingredients of medicines.

The liver uses enzymes called cytochrome P450s (CYP), which are responsible for metabolizing many different substances like caffeine and nicotine through different pathways depending on what they are being used for. However, some people have genetic mutations that cause problems with CYP function that then impacts metabolism of these drugs.

A new study now shows that just as with some people being genetically predisposed to certain diseases, so too could genetic differences in the ability to metabolize prescription drugs be used to predict adverse effects more effectively than the traditional clinical criteria such as age and gender currently used.

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