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Migrants are keystone of economy



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

From the earliest days of human history people have migrated from place to place in search of better food and shelter. Although today migration is largely driven by people seeking enhanced work and economic opportunities, or to escape natural or man-made calamities, at its core the motive behind all human mobility remains the same — to find better food, shelter and safety.

While many people around the world choose to migrate so as to pursue more gainful economic opportunities, hundreds of millions of other migrants do not have the luxury of this choice. They are forced to flee from either conflicts, persecutions, terrorism, and human rights violations, or increasingly to escape from adverse effects of climate change, such as devastating floods, fires, droughts or famine.

Regardless of the reasons behind their mobility, migrants and displaced people represent some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. Global migrants



also continue to be the victims of xenophobic attacks and popular backlash usually fueled by divisive rhetoric from populist politicians aiming for electoral gains.

Setting aside the alleged negatives, it is important to keep in mind that despite

the challenges they face, migrants spur development in host countries through their knowledge, networks, and skills. They also contribute to the growth of local, regional and global economies, and help build stronger, more resilient communities.

It is no different in Kuwait, where political and social demonization of migrants has continued unabated over the years, with sharp increases in such anti-migrant comments witnessed during economic downturns, election periods, and during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this popular demand and political pressure, the government has taken a number of appeasement measures, including increasing the pace of retrenching migrant workers in the public and private sectors in line with its workforce Kuwaitization policies.

Lawmakers have also added their legislative weight to reducing and removing migrants from the labor pool and the economy by introducing various measures to deter and discourage foreign migration. Among various steps implemented in recent years are increasing utility prices for expatriates, limiting subsidies to citizens, increasing healthcare fees, and planned withdrawal of access to public hospitals for migrants, as well as proposals to tax expatriate remittances.

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IOM Kuwait marks International Migrants Day



Celebrated every year on 18 December, the International Migrants Day is dedicated by the United Nations (UN) to recognize the contributions of migrants across the world. "For decades, the State of Kuwait has been supporting IOM humanitarian operations worldwide. In 2022 alone, Kuwait generously supported IOM humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, Ukraine and Pakistan reaching thousands of migrants and internally displaced people," said IOM Chief of Mission in Kuwait, Mazen AboulHosn.

He added, "In May of this year, Kuwait

participated in the first-ever International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), convened at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The forum was an opportunity to celebrate successes and reflect on challenges faced in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) since its adoption in 2018. During the IMRF, the State of Kuwait affirmed its commitment to achieving the goals of GCM in line with its national priorities and policies, and to support the IMRF declaration."

The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is an effective tool for States to discuss how best to address challenges to human mobility without compromising the human rights of people and states' sovereignty. IOM's efforts over the past years, complemented by partnerships, have helped ensure we are better placed to respond to growing challenges facing migrants, transit, and host communities.

In 2020 approximately 281 million people are international migrants living in a country other than their country of birth and this number has recently increased.

Every year, people around the world face the devastating impacts of conflicts, diseases, disasters, and climate change that force them to migrate.

"If we look at migration from a development angle, there were 169 million migrant workers in the labor force in 2019; and with their skills and remittances they contributed to development. For instance, international remittance flows stood at \$605 billion in 2021 which supported dignified lives and allowed local markets to flourish, especially in Low- and Middle-Income Countries," added Mazen AboulHosn.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kuwait marks the International Migrants Day by organizing two film screening events for students hosted by two private universities in Kuwait, which comes under the umbrella of the Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) to raise awareness on migration.

IOM in Kuwait is also supporting a Blood Drive initiative, which is carried out by community volunteers and civil society organizations. This initiative is aimed at



Mazen AboulHosn
Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

encouraging migrants to come together and donate to the national blood bank, and to meet the level of demand for patients in need of blood transfusions.



Migratory birds make annual landing in Kuwait

Bird-watchers and naturalists in Kuwait enjoyed a spectacular display last week as thousands of migratory Great Cormorants swooped low over the coast of Kazma in the Subbiya region in search of their customary safe haven along coastlines in Kuwait to spend the winter.

Visitors to the region documented pictures of the bird flock as they entered Kuwait Bay and flew along the sea-coast, in graceful formations moving up and down in a simulation of waves in the sea. Commenting

on the annual bird migration to Kuwait, the head of Environment Lens team, Rashid Al-Hajji, said that every year, from the beginning of November until March, the Great Cormorants land in Kuwait as part of their annual migration.

Pointing out that Kuwait enjoys a privileged location for the birds as it lies at the head of the Arabian Gulf, Al-Hajji added that there were over 20,000 birds making the landing in Kuwait each year.

He explained that the cormorants are very sociable birds and include over 38 species, with some species weighing between 1.5 to 5.3 kilograms, and having a length of between 70 and 102 centimeters. They are characterized by their black color, long neck, stout head and long beak.

He added that as winter recedes, the birds leave in March to hatch, and they are among the most beautiful birds to watch as they usually fly low in large flocks that display dramatic formations of rings and other shapes.



Councilor proposes plan for licensed vending vans

A member of the municipal council, Engineer Munira Al-Amir, has put forward a proposal for licensed vending vans as part of a permanent system to make available products, including fresh vegetables, across Kuwait and especially in upcoming cities that are still underserved by the regular network of shops and cooperatives.

She said that these units would be green-friendly as they would be powered by solar energy, and hygienic as they would be regularly monitored by municipal health authorities. In addition, once these units are launched it would get rid of the street-vendors who currently distribute inferior and unhygienic products to these areas.

Al-Amir explained that these shops are divided into two types, the first for serving juices, drinks and ice cream, and the second for vegetables and fruits of all kinds. She added that the idea is to move forward with a modern, integrated and advanced system and mechanism that would replace the prevailing outdated system. She pointed out that the units would operate from solar energy, they would not burden the electricity grid or lead to additional pollution.

The counselor added that her proposal would also involve a network of internal and external surveillance of these units, including a GPS monitoring system to track its movements, as well as ensure that foods sold were stored under specific conditions.

Highlighting the economic aspects of her proposal, Al-Amir explained that the setting up of an advanced distribution network under the management of the municipality, which is leased to approved target groups, would become a sales outlet and a source of income for them. Additionally, it would meet and replace the special needs for services in underserved areas that are currently being delivered by street vendors, at least until the traditional network of cooperatives and other service centers can be established in these areas.

The proposal also increases the state's resources by leasing these units and benefiting from the income, while also providing an opportunity for local farmers to lease these units and market their products directly to consumers. Moreover, Al-Amir mentioned that one of the most important things during the project's implementation is health safety. She also pointed out that the units will be positioned in a suitable place for work away from the heat of the sun. She added that her perception of implementing the project will be through development of a practical plan to carry out the proposal in stages, with a limited number of units being built initially and then gradually expanding the number of units based on evaluating and gaining experience on the practicality from the trial project.





Canada and Kuwait enhance cooperation with MoU

By Reaven D'Souza
Managing Editor

Kuwait and Canada signed a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation in the fields of humanitarian crises, natural disasters, technical expertise and information sharing as part of increased engagement between the two countries.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The Times Kuwait, Canada's Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Harjit Sajjan said that the MoU would allow them

Harjit Sajjan

Canadian Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency

to direct teams in both countries to work together to tackle climate change, food security and gender equality.

The minister reiterated the deep rooted ties and aspiration for continued cooperation between both countries in several fields.

The MoU between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) would not only help find opportunities where the two countries would work together but help countries affected by calamities.

Minister Sajjan who served as defense minister prior to his new portfolio visited Kuwait six times in as many years and endorsed the wisdom and balance of Kuwait's foreign policy and its efforts in maintaining security and peace in the region. He hailed Kuwait's humanitarian role in the world and said Canada was keen to work with Kuwait in resolving humanitarian and other issues of concern together.

Among the several issues Minister Sajjan discussed during the interview, he highlighted climate change as being an great issue of concern and among one of the greatest challenges facing the world today, as it not only creates humanitarian crises through natural disasters but also migration and conflicts that could be avoided.

He said food security was another major area of cooperation that Canada could cooperate with Kuwait. He pointed out that sharing of ideas in modern technology in agriculture and the Canadian experience could greatly benefit Kuwait's quest for food security. He noted that researchers from both sides could greatly benefit from each others expertise.

Minister Sajjan also reiterated Canada's position on gender equality and pointed out that women comprise more than half the population and their contribution to the economy is priceless.

Canada's role in women empowerment is well known and the country has invested

heavily in measures to promote women's economic rights and opportunities and provide women a voice as decision makers and leaders.

He praised Kuwait's Ambassador to Canada H.E. Reem Al Khalid, as a strong women leader who is doing a wonderful job, just as is Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Aliya Mawani representing Canada in Kuwait.

Minister Sajjan was also vocal in his support for the youth calling them the "pillar of the Future" adding that Kuwait must invest in them, enhance their capabilities and make sure that they get the best education and training opportunities so that they can carry out their responsibilities.

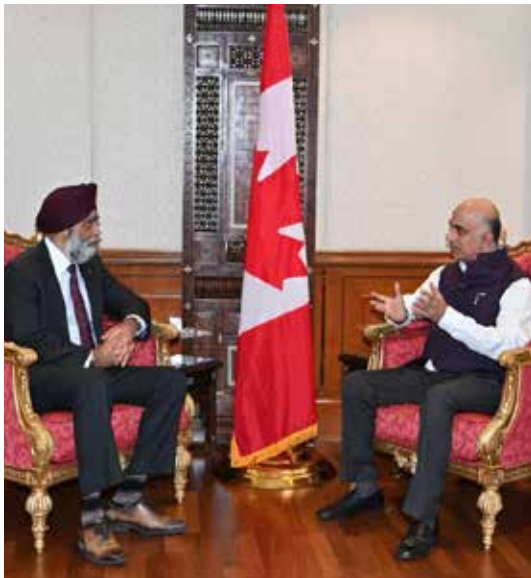
Rather than impose on them, he said the youth should be involved in decision making so that they can be masters of their own destinies and make the world a better place to live in.

Canada is a multicultural society and Canadians pride themselves in encouraging all of their citizens to pursue their own cultures. Canada has been consistently voted in the top 10 countries with the



best quality of life that includes food, housing, quality education, health care and employment,

Minister Sajjan who prides his Indian roots clearly embodies that multicultural spirit and, as he pointed out, the Canadian Minister of Commerce is of Chinese origin, the minister of transport of Syrian origin and Minister of Culture of Argentinean origin, but we are all proud Canadians.



“

Food security was another major area of cooperation that Canada could cooperate with Kuwait.

He pointed out that sharing of ideas in modern technology in agriculture and the Canadian experience could greatly benefit Kuwait's quest for food security.

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Kuwait Foreign Minister meets Canadian Minister of International Development Harjit Sajjan.

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Maltese Embassy celebrates National Day

The Embassy of Malta hosted a grand celebration to mark the country's National Day anniversary. The chief guest, the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Ammar Al-Ajmi, along with members of the diplomatic corps, special guests and media personnel attended the event, held at the Marina Hotel on 13 December.

In his welcome speech, Ambassador of Malta H.E. Raymond Sarsero highlighted

the strength and durability of Maltese-Kuwaiti relations, which he described to be close, friendly, and based on cooperation, mutual interests, common values and respect for each other developed over the past five decades.

He pointed out that these relations are buttressed by several agreements and memorandums of understanding that cover all areas of bilateral cooperation and form the legal framework for it. The ambassador added that these agreements also

reflected the strong political commitment to maintain, support and enhance joint cooperation in all sectors, including in trade, investment, health, education and much more.

Ambassador Sarsero stressed, "We work closely with Kuwait in various fields, and therefore I am sure that this cooperation will be strengthened in the future, as both countries continue to participate in strengthening relations at the bilateral, multilateral and international levels."

At the international level, he said, the relations between the two countries are characterized by a common mission to enhance international peace and security through political dialogue and cooperation.

For his part Minister Al-Ajmi praised the Kuwaiti-Maltese relations, which he said date back to over 50 years. He pointed out that there are a number of Kuwaiti students studying in Malta in various medical specializations.

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosts annual Gala and Excellence awards

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait held its 37th Annual Gala and Excellence Awards event at the Grand Hyatt Hotel Kuwait, with over 120 AmCham members and non-members attending the celebrations to highlight accomplishments throughout the past year.

The event was held in collaboration with Platinum Sponsor, Kuwait Resources House (KRH), Tariq Alghanim Limited, and Travel & Tourism partner for the event, IFA International Travel & Tourism.



The event began with AmCham's Chairman, Pete Swift welcoming members, companies and friends from across different industries in Kuwait to the function. A special welcome was given to the Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy, James Holtsnider, guests of honor, and awardees. In his speech on the occasion, Holtsnider thanked AmCham for their great contribution throughout Discover America Week, and their plans for further collaboration between the US government and Kuwait in order to enhance bilateral relations, and create a more collaborative and positive relationship between the two countries.

For her part, AmCham Kuwait's Vice-Chair, Dr. Arezou Harraf thanked the event's sponsors and welcomed their representatives to the Excellence Awards. Executive Director

of AmCham Kuwait, Paola de la Roche, then underlined that the event highlights the organization's achievements in the past year and recognizes several of the entities that have supported the organization since the beginning.

Awardees for the evening were James Holtsnider for Leadership Impact; Honorary Members / Founders Awards were presented to Fred Shuaibi, vice-chair of KNDR and chair of the Energy Focus Group of AmCham Kuwait; Jafar Behbehani, chairman of TriStar Motorcycles Establishment; Lionel Gittens, managing director of American General Trading (AGT), and Dr. Ernest Alexander, legal advisor of Al Otaibi & Partners. The Longest Service Award was presented to Jenson Joy, operations manager of AmCham Kuwait. The 2022 Champions Awards went to Kuwait & Gulf Link (KGL), Gas & Oil Field Services Company (GOFSCO), Lockheed Martin, Kuwait Resources House (KRH), while the Focus Group Award was presented to Women in Business Focus Group (WIB FG), and the Most Active Focus Group Member Award was given to Talal Al-Wazzan Member of the FMCG/F&B.

The AmCham Kuwait team then held a raffle draw for participants with prizes including products and vouchers from companies participating and supporting the event, including.

On a note unrelated to the gala event but highlighting the charitable events held by the organization, over the past year, last week, members of ABCK-AmCham Kuwait, in partnership with the Bridge Company and with support from Champion and Chairman's Club Member, Lockheed Martin, visited children's hospice- Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) and the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH), and distributed toys and stationary, to the kids.

AmCham Kuwait was able to support this initiative through its members and friends who wished to bring holiday happiness to the kids.

Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) & Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) is non-governmental and charitable organizations that provide psychosocial and palliative care services for pediatric patients and their families in Kuwait. All BACCH services are free for their children.

AmCham Kuwait consistently seeks strategic partnerships with member companies and organizations, driving engagement across various Corporate Social Responsibility activities and initiatives.



Al-Muzaini Exchange Co. opens 126th branch in Kuwait

Al-Muzaini Exchange Company continues its plans of geographical expansion within the State of Kuwait by opening its new branch in Al Qairawan co-operative society. The new branch is open from 8 am to 9 pm.

Al Muzaini now has 126 branches within the state of Kuwait in addition to their self-service kiosks and the Al Muzaini application, all aimed at enhancing customer experience. This expansion reflects the company's endeavor and commitment to providing the highest quality of financial services, such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange and bill payments with ease, comfort, safety and at the best prices, seven days a week. Al-Muzaini has also recently launched their foreign currency delivery service wherein customers can order their selected currency to be delivered to any location in Kuwait within hours. The service can be found either online, or by using the Al Muzaini application.

The General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Mr. Hugh Fernandes, the department managers, along with a number of the company's valued customers inaugurated the new branch on Monday, December 5, 2022, and Mr. Fernandes stated: "We are keen to strengthen our leading position in the local market through the growth of our largest network of branches in Kuwait, to ensure that we provide the best remittance service experience to our customers and meet their money transfer needs."

The company always strives to make its financial services accessible to all. In addition to its strong network of branches - Al Muzaini application provides safe and simplified financial solutions with many features such as: availability in all OS platforms, new customer registration, the ability to add a new beneficiary, and benefits from various other services that can be utilized while using the application.

Lawmakers propose taxing remittances

Representatives Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Shuaib Shaaban, Falah Al-Hajri, Abdullah Fahd, and Saud Al-Asfoor submitted a proposal in parliament seeking to impose a fee on all foreign financial remittances from Kuwait.

The proposal is said to stipulate that a

foreign financial transfer fee be mandatory when sending money abroad, regardless of the currency or the sender, or whether the sender is an individual, company, institution or association. The proposal further adds that the proceeds from this fee would be transferred to the state treasury.

The amount of the transfer fee in the proposal is set at 1 percent of the total amount transferred, and that the Central Bank of Kuwait shall take the necessary measures to obligate local banks, branches of foreign banks and exchange companies to collect these fees, and in the manner specified in the executive memorandum of the same law.

British Embassy organizes photo exhibition on King's birthday

On the occasion of the 74th birthday of King Charles III of the United Kingdom, the British Embassy in coordination with Kuwaiti researcher in British affairs, Dr. Issa Dashti, held a photo exhibition at the Kuwait National Library of rare photos of the king during his visit to Kuwait in 1989.

Speaking on the occasion, British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis, praised the relations between Britain and Kuwait, describing them as historically and culturally distinguished. She also expressed her admiration for the exhibition, describing it as distinctive because it contained rare pictures of the first visit to Kuwait by the King.

She stated that the pictures

prove how much the King enjoyed the visit, adding, "It is wonderful to see these pictures that show the depth of the bilateral relations between Britain and Kuwait and the strong relationship between the two ruling families in the two countries."

She praised the efforts of Dr. Dashti, and said "I greatly respect his dedication to search for more in our history, as he devotes a lot of his time, energy and money to reviewing the archive papers and traveling to discover more and know the stories behind the pictures as well, so it is great to share what he does with the British Embassy, because it helps us understand our historical footprint in Kuwait as well."



For her part, Sheikha Hala Al-Bader, head of the Diplomatic Women's Committee, said that Kuwaiti-British relations are

exceptional, distinguished and long-standing, and is an example to follow in international relations. She added that the Kuwaiti people

will not forget the permanent and honorable stances of the friendly United Kingdom throughout history to support Kuwaiti rights.

In his comments on the photos exhibited, Dr. Dashti noted that it included pictures of King Charles III when he visited Kuwait in 1989 when he was Prince of Wales and heir to the throne, as this was the first official visit to Kuwait. During the visit, King Charles visited several places, including the Kuwait National Museum and Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah, the Hunting and Equestrian Club, and the Central Bank of Kuwait. Dr. Dashti added that the visit reflected the extent of strong and solid relations between the two countries.

Skipping classes no longer viable for school kids

Ministry of Education has shut the doors on students who engage in skipping classes through the introduction of a new digital attendance monitoring and reporting system in schools. As a first step, many primary, middle and secondary schools have input into the system all the necessary data about the student, the guardian and the school through the civil number of the student or guardian.

The electronic application will provide

complete data regarding the student in school, including daily attendance, absences, academic and behavior reports, and commitments to class schedules. The system, which would also facilitate communication between teachers and schools with parents, has won praise from educators and parents who said this step is a quantum leap in the educational work of schools, which would put the guardian in the picture moment by moment in continuous follow-up of their children. The digital application also reveals the teachers' shortcomings and the negatives of some schools, with enquiries from guardians responded to on the same day, relieving pressure on everyone involved.

The former director of educational affairs in the Ahmadi educational district, Adel Al-Rashed, termed the electronic absence application "excellent", saying it will keep the

guardian in continuous follow-up of their children and allow them to know everything about the child in school, which would help relieve pressure on school administrations by sharing information if the child absconds classes or when the child begins to show falling academic levels.

Former Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning at the Ministry of Education, Dr. Khaled Al-Rasheed, appreciated the ministry's approval of the application of electronic absence, stressing that it is an excellent step that "we strongly support. He pointed out that often schools invite parents to attend meetings to discuss the students' academic level, on days and times when the guardian has to attend work.

The new system would do away with these personal meetings with parents, as everything



about their children would be available online. This would facilitate live communication between the school and parents and allow parents to follow up on the academic and co-curricular activities and achievements of the child. The new system would also enhance the digital transformation of schools and allow them to keep pace with the rapidly evolving modern technologies in education.



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Thought for the week

“It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.

- James Baldwin
American novelist

PAM to launch shelters for expatriate male workers

Director General of the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), Mubarak Al-Jafur, said that Kuwait is allocating a shelter for expatriate men, similar to the one currently existing for women, which would provide legal protection, as well as health and psychological care for those seeking refuge in the center.



Speaking on the occasion of the United Nations' observance of International Human Rights Day on 10 December, Al-Jafur added that all executive decisions issued by the authority provide protection for workers in accordance with international standards and agreements, especially with regard to their financial rights or their right to transfer from one employer to another.

Official statistics show that so far in 2022, PAM investigated 36,598 labor complaints, including those related to absconding reports, rearranging worker sponsor relationship, resolving disputes between the worker and the employer, and extracting copies of

documents that would prove the labor relationship. In addition, the authority evaluated complaints registered on labor disputes, work permit disputes and payment of financial dues. It was also able to return the financial rights of KD24,097 to domestic workers who did not receive their salaries, in addition to registering 780 complaints against employers, during the first ten months of this year.

On a related note, the head of the National Office for Human Rights, Jassim Al-Mubarak, referred to "Kuwait's keenness to grant rights and provide protection," to everyone, while stressing the country's interest in including and giving priority to human rights issues and amending laws related to rights and freedoms within the government's work program.

Al-Mubarak said that the state is keen to activate the role of the human rights office in defending freedoms and granting rights, within the framework of the reference of the constitution and relevant international regulations. He highlighted the importance of coordination with government agencies, civil society and international organizations, to meet the challenges and obstacles facing the promotion and protection of human rights.

He pointed to the country's support for human rights include finding solutions to support labor rights, establishing a shelter for female workers who seek protection, allocating a shelter for affected male workers, supporting needy families inside and outside the country, protecting women and families from violence, preventing human trafficking, and ensuring a decent life for citizens and residents.



IDAK releases Oral Health Guide

Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) released the 8th Volume of IDAK Oral Health Guide, titled, 'New Age Dentistry', at a glittering ceremony on 9 December at The Millennium Hotel and Convention Center, Salmiya.

Chairman of Kuwait Dental Association, Dr. Mohammad Dashti, graced the occasion as chief guest, along with guests of honor, Dean of Faculty of Dentistry, Kuwait University, Dr. Rashed AlAzemi, the President of New Osler for Medical Services, Dr. Osama Al Shafei, the CEO of AlSayafe Ghassan Homs, and the CEO of DDS International Omar Swedan. Other specially invited guests included the Center and Department heads, representatives from the different companies sponsoring IDAK, and executive members of various associations in Kuwait. General Secretary Dr. Jagan Baskaradoss welcomed the audience and President Dr. Thomas Thomas enumerated the journey of IDAK under different past-presidents of IDAK.

Chief Editor of the Oral Guide, Dr. Deendayal Mittapalli introduced the latest Oral Health Guide, while former Presidents of IDAK, Dr. Shaheer Malik and Dr. Rajesh Alexander were awarded the prestigious 'IDAKian of the



Year Award' for 2020 and 2022, respectively. The various sponsors of the event felicitated were New Osler for Medical Services as Platinum sponsor, Al Sayafe Medical Company as Diamond sponsor, DDS International as Gold sponsor and Advanced Technology Company as Silver sponsor, in addition to the two Premium Sponsors, Biohorizons Dental Implant Company, and Alpha Medicals. IDAK's official airline partner, Al Jazeera Airways, represented by Ms. Martha and Mr. Ahmad, provided two complimentary tickets to Dr. Thomas Thomas, while Vice-President Dr. Jayashree Dexith proposed the vote of thanks.

The official function was followed by a cultural extravaganza, titled 'Jashn-E-Muskan', which was organized by the Cultural Committee, headed by Dr. Prathap Unnithan. IDAK members and families dazzled on the stage with fabulous dances, innovative dramas, a creative fashion show and a riveting grand finale which left the audience spellbound. The MCs for the event were Dr. Reeby Sara Thomas, Dr. Prathap Unnithan, Dr. Shalin Anna Simon, Dr. Bankima Malhotra, Dr. Devi Priya, Dr. Shilpa Raj, Dr. Heba Ansari and Dr. Remya Elizabeth Mathew. The eventful evening came to a close with a sumptuous buffet dinner. IDAK Council thanked their esteemed sponsors, as well as Al-Jezza Royal Advertising Company, Tag Events, The Millennium Hotel management, IDAK Committee members, volunteers and participants for their support in organizing the perfect event.

RECIPE

Hot Chilly Paneer



It might be cold on the Indo-Chinese political and defense front, but that should not stop anyone from enjoying a hot Indo-Chinese recipe. Hot Chili Paneer, a favorite Indo-Chinese fusion dish, can be served as an appetizer, snack or as a side to a main course. If serving as a side, serve with fried rice and an Asian curry of choice.

Indo-Chinese cuisine is usually made using chicken but, for all the vegetarians out there, paneer is an amazing substitute for chicken and it absolutely gives the perfect flavor as chicken.

Total Time: 30 minutes
Serving: 2-3 people

Ingredients:

For coating paneer:

- 200g paneer
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp corn flour
- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp red chili sauce
- 1 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ cup water
- Vegetable oil for deep frying



Chef Chhaya Thakker

For sauteing:

- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 inch ginger piece
- 4-5 garlic cloves
- 1 onion
- 1 capsicum
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp corn flour (dissolved in 3-4 tbsp water)
- 1/2 tsp pepper powder
- Salt to taste
- 3-4 green chili

Instructions:

- Chop the paneer into cubes
- Dice onion, capsicum to cube shape
- Slit green chillies lengthwise
- Chop finely ginger garlic
- In a bowl, make a thick paste of all-purpose flour, cornflour, salt with a little water. Add paneer cubes, mix gently and marinate for 10 minutes.
- Heat oil in a deep frying pan
- Drop the marinated paneer cubes into the hot oil
- Once cooked, drain the excess oil in kitchen paper and set aside
- To make the saute, heat a wok and add 2 tbsp of oil
- Add chopped garlic/ ginger, saute until the raw smell disappears
- Add slit green chillies and saute for a few seconds more
- Add onion, capsicum and fry on high for half a minute
- Add the sauces, pepper and salt and stir well
- Add fried paneer cubes to the wok
- Stir to coat the paneer with the sauce mix
- Remove from flame, add lemon juice and combine well
- Garnish with freshly chopped coriander leaves and spring onions, mix well and saute for a minute before serving.

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

Kuwait adheres to human rights commitments

On the International Day for Human Rights on 10 December, Kuwait underlined its commitment to basic human rights of all citizens and residents in the country and added that it devotes particular attention to activating the role of the National Diwan for Human Rights for defending these basic rights.

Elaborating on this commitment on human rights and the role of the National Diwan, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Nazaha (Integrity) Abdulaziz Majid Al-Majid said the significance of the diwan lies in that it is an independent body that advocates the human rights and seeks to enhance them at

the national level.

Speaking to media personnel after visiting the National Diwan for Human Rights on international Human Rights Day, the minister revealed that the diwan proposes amendments to legislations and files reports and recommendations to the relevant State authorities regarding the human rights status in the country.

He stressed that the diwan practices its jurisdictions with respect of receiving complaints, monitoring human rights abuses, seeking facts



Minister of Justice
Abdul Aziz Al-Majed

about cases and coordinating with the concerned parties. Citing the Kuwait Constitution, which guarantees peoples' justice, freedom and equality, the minister said that all people of Kuwait are equal under the law with respect of rights and public duties; there is no gender, origin, linguistic or religious indiscrimination and the Kuwait Constitution guarantees much of the rights and freedoms; provided their practice does not breach public order and decency.

Affirming the State of Kuwait's adherence to international pledges on human rights the minister pointed out that when Kuwait signed up to various international human rights treaties, it had clearly expressed reservations on issues that contradict its social values and this had been clear in the explanatory declarations that guaranteed Kuwait's implementation of its legislations.

He added that Kuwait's deterrent penalties such as execution do not contradict its adherence to the international conventions, and were in line with the universal declaration of civil and political rights that allowed the execution for most dangerous crimes.



LuLu Exchange opens two new branches

LuLu Exchange – Kuwait's leading payments provider offering cross-border payments and currency exchange services, today opened its 30th and 31st branches in Salmiya 2 and Mangaf 3. The branch was inaugurated by Mr. Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, in the presence of senior company management.

Addressing the gathering on the sidelines of the opening, Mr. Adeeb Ahamed, said, "We are excited to open two new branches and

dedicate them to the people of Kuwait today. The Kuwaiti economy is a lifeline for thousands of expats, and as a responsible financial services provider, we are keen to expand our network to bring our services closer to our customers. We are also happy to see our investments in digital services ably complement our physical network in making the payments experience seamless and convenient for our customers, while fully adhering to the country's enhanced regulations."



KCST awaits approval to launch College of Digital Management

Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) is to launch a new College of Digital Management once approval is received from the General Secretariat of the Council of Private Universities. Revealing this, KCST President Dr. Khalid Al-Begain, said that the College of Digital Management will mark the first time in Kuwait that management disciplines will be taught in a digital manner.

Indicating that subjects to be taught at the new college include Digital Accounting, Business Administration, and Digital Marketing, Al-Begain added that the college is also in the process of establishing smart laboratories for renewable (solar) energy, which would help students in electronic specialization

to prepare their graduation projects.

Pointing out that the main majors at KCST are geared to meet the demands of the labor market, he noted that among the secondary majors offered at the college are in the field of computer engineering, such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and information analysis. Speaking about the college's intention to expand the engineering courses offered, he revealed that they are awaiting accreditation for civil engineering majors with smart infrastructure, which if approved, will commence from the next academic year 2023/2024.

Al-Begain also disclosed that 516 students have so far graduated from Kuwait College of Science and Technology in various academic disciplines.



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Bangladesh Embassy celebrates Victory Day

Bangladesh Embassy celebrated the country's 52nd Victory Day on 16 December. Victory Day is a precious day for the Bengali people, as the country was liberated from the Pakistani occupation forces on this day 51 years ago, after a nine-month-long bloodstained War of Liberation. On 16 December 1971, Bangladesh was born as an independent country under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the cost of the supreme sacrifice of three million people and the honor of nearly half a million women.

Victory Day commemorates the victory of the allied forces over the Pakistani forces in the Bangladesh Liberation War, and the secession of former East Pakistan from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to become the independent sovereign nation of Bangladesh.

On 7 March 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh gave a rousing speech at the Ramna Race Course in Dhaka to a gathering of over one million people. It was delivered during a period of escalating tensions between East Pakistan and the powerful political and military establishment of West Pakistan. In the speech, Bangabandhu proclaimed: "This time the struggle is for our freedom. This time the struggle is for our independence." The speech inspired the Bengali people to prepare for a war of independence amid widespread reports of armed mobilization by West Pakistan. On 30 October 2017, UNESCO added the speech in the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage.

On the night of 25 March, 1971 the Pakistan Armed Forces launched 'Operation Searchlight' in the capital of East Pakistan. Tanks rolled out

on the streets of Dhaka. The troops massacred students and intellectuals in Dhaka University, as well as many civilians in other parts of the city. It set major cities ablaze and crushed resistance from the police and the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR).

Just before his arrest on the night of 25 March, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sent a message about attacks on EPR and police barracks in Dhaka, and declared the independence of Bangladesh. This message was broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro (Independent Bangla Radio Centre) on 26 March, and was widely reported in newspapers all around the world.

The war pitted East Pakistan, and later India, against West Pakistan, and lasted for the duration of nine months. The war was one of the most violent wars of the 20th century; it witnessed large-scale atrocities, the exodus of 10 million refugees and the killing of 3 million people by the Pakistani armed forces. After nine months of bloody war Bangladesh was liberated on 16 December 1971.

Victory Day is a national holiday in Bangladesh and celebrations of the day have been taking place since 1972. At the beginning of the day, the Hon'ble President and the Hon'ble Prime Minister pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths, timed with the rising of the sun, at the National Memorial at Savar on the outskirts of the capital. This is then followed by foreign diplomats, family members of freedom fighters and wounded freedom fighters laying wreaths. Later, leaders of different political and social organizations and people from all walks of life pay tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

The Hon'ble President and the Hon'ble Prime Minister issue separate messages on the occasion, paying glowing tributes to the martyrs of the



Liberation War .

Victory Day in Bangladesh is a joyous celebration in which popular culture plays a great role. TV and radio stations broadcast special programs and patriotic songs. Different political parties and socioeconomic organizations undertake programs to mark the day in a befitting manner, including the paying of respects at Jatiyo Smriti Soudho, the national memorial at Savar in Dhaka District. The victory day programs also include decorating city streets with national flags and colorful festoons, and the illumination of important buildings and establishments, roads and street islands at night. The day's highlight is the colorful parade on National Parade Ground

where contingents of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force as well as freedom fighters, paramilitary forces, law enforcement agencies and various ministries of the government participate. The parade is reviewed by the President of Bangladesh in his capacity as Commander in Chief.

A statement from the Bangladesh Embassy noted that Kuwait recognized Bangladesh on 4 November 1973. Since then the two friendly countries have been maintaining excellent bilateral relations in the field of trade and economic cooperation, export and import, education and cultural cooperation, as well as in labor market and defense cooperation. We deeply appreciate the contribution of Kuwait during natural calamities in Bangladesh, and in promoting socio-economic development in Bangladesh through the Kuwait Fund, as well as hosting around 250,000 migrant workers.

Similarly, whenever the situation demanded, Bangladesh stood shoulder to shoulder with our time-tested friend, Kuwait. Participation of Bangladesh Army as a part of coalition forces during liberation of Kuwait in 1990, presence of Bangladesh Military Contingent since 1991, sending of emergency medical team during the COVID-19 pandemic are some of the collaborations worth mentioning.

On this joyous Victory Day, we express our sincere gratitude to the Amir, His Highness, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Crown Prince, His Highness, Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and to the brotherly people of the State of Kuwait for their continued support towards us.

May Bangladesh-Kuwait friendship live forever.

Migrants are keystone of economy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

International remittances by migrants — defined as financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants directly to families or communities in their countries of origin — are among the most tangible links between migration and development. These annual remittances are larger than the foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) received by low- and middle-income countries.

According to the latest data from the World Bank's 'Migration and Development Brief', officially recorded remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are expected to increase by 4.2 percent in 2022 to reach \$630 billion. This follows an almost record recovery of 8.6 percent in 2021. The top five recipient countries in descending order for remittances in 2021 were India (\$89 billion), Mexico (\$54 bn), China (\$53 bn), the Philippines (\$37 bn), and Egypt (\$32 bn).

Migrant remittances to their country of origin has been a frequent bone of contention and debate among parliamentarians in Kuwait's National Assembly. Last week, once again, a handful of MPs tabled a proposal to tax all foreign remittances from Kuwait at a uniform rate of 1 percent of the value of the transaction. With a ball-park figure of around KD5 billion remitted by migrants from Kuwait in 2021, the proposed tax would have netted the government an additional KD50 million in revenue.

While the KD50 million is nothing to sneeze at, there is one aspect that the learned lawmakers did not perhaps take into consideration. The remitted amount was not a charity or subsidy of the state to the migrants, it was money earned through the sweat and toil of these workers over a year. And, more importantly, the outcome of every fil from this labor flowed to the state in the form of an increase in economic productivity.

From Economics 101: Wages or salary paid to an employee represents the productivity that an employer receives in exchange for the amount paid. Let us do the mathematics behind this statement. For example, if an employer paid an employee KD100, it is because the worker generated the equivalent of KD100 in productivity. To remain a viable enterprise, employers usually pay a worker less than what

they generate through their productivity, so at a minimum, to pay a worker KD100 the employer would have accrued KD110 in productivity terms.

To extrapolate from the above result, the KD5 billion that migrants remitted in 2021 came from providing, at the least, KD5.5 billion in productivity gains to the economy. No one will doubt that the KD500 million in productivity gains beats the KD50 million from taxing remittances. Think about this for a while... Meanwhile, it also helps to remember that the call to tax remittances comes despite calls by the UN, the World Bank and other institutions for lowering global remittances fees.

World Bank studies show that lowering remittance fees by 2 percentage points would potentially translate to \$12 billion of annual savings for international migrants from LMICs. Incidentally, this US\$12 billion is higher than what Kuwait or other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states deliver as ODA to LMICs. Maybe, the lawmakers do need to take a refresher on Economics 101.

Rather than rehashing time-worn calls for Kuwaitization and taxing migrant remittances, it would be far more productive for the state to retain the productivity of migrants in the workforce, especially considering the relatively poor productivity of many public sector entities. And, more profitable than taxing remittances would be to create increased opportunities for workers to spend their money in Kuwait, whether through investments in the local economy, or by providing more entertainment venues where migrants could spend some of their discretionary money.

If any evidence of this multi-pronged approach to retaining productive migrants and some of their earnings within the local economy were needed, parliamentarians need look no further than neighboring United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and increasingly Qatar. Despite migrants in these countries spending in the local economy, the UAE and Saudi Arabia were the second and third largest countries for remittance outflows in 2020, after the United States in the first spot globally. International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations migration agency, defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border, or within a State, away from their habitual

place of residence. This definition is regardless of the person's legal status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes for the movement are; or what the length of the stay is.

In its latest biennial World Migration Report for 2022 the IOM estimates that at the start of 2021 there were approximately 281 million migrants worldwide living in a state other than their country of birth. To put this staggering statistics in perspective, the 281 million global migrant cohort represents more than the entire population of Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world.

Since international migration is a global phenomena, no state can manage migration effectively and sustainably in isolation. In 2018 the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) — the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. The GCM offers the opportunity and guidance to actualize human mobility and seize the opportunities it presents.

Kuwait is a signatory to the GCM since 2018 and in May of this year, Kuwait also participated in the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), convened at the UN Headquarters in New York, to discuss challenges faced in implementation of the GCM. During the IMRF, Kuwait reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the goals of GCM in line with its national priorities and policies, and to support the IMRF declaration.

Unfortunately, many of the principles contained in the GCM remain either ignored or only partially addressed through national legislation. Kuwait's legal framework for migration dates back to the 1959 Aliens Residence Law, which continues to govern the residence and employment of migrants. The law forms the basis for the Temporary Contractual Workers (TCWs) system based on a policy of 'kafala' or sponsorship of foreigners by Kuwaitis. Much of the human rights violations perpetrated against migrants have been attributed to this 'kafala' system.

Due to several obvious as well as inherent reasons — including stymied efforts at improving productivity of national workforce,

and prevailing reluctance to integrate the so-called 'stateless' bedouins into the population — it is inconceivable how Kuwait will be able to meet its ongoing and future goals such as Vision 2035 for a New Kuwait, without relying on its productive foreign workforce, despite the negative comments and attitudes towards such workers.

Migrants worldwide are often exposed to abuse and exploitation, and have limited access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and to legal redress of their grievances. They are also considered by many in the host country population as a burden on the state's resources, as infringing on the traditional cultures and social mores of society, and they are frequently blamed for rising criminal activity in a community.

It is true that some migrants may follow different faiths or display cultural practices that are at variance from those practiced by the native population. However, there is no evidence that migrants associated or implicated in law-breaking activities are more inclined to criminal behavior than locals engaged in similar anti-social patterns. Moreover, many migrant destination countries are likely to become dependent on immigrants in the near future to replenish the domestic workforces that continue to fall as birth rates among locals decrease and the aging population increases.

In December 2000, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 18 December of each year as International Migrants Day. The day aims to raise awareness on the challenges that migrants around the world face, and to highlight the important contribution they make to countries and communities where they live and work, as well as to their countries of origin.

As we approach a quarter-century of commemorating the annual International Migrants Day, the latest World Migration Report by the IMO points a stark picture on the plight of migrants and the huge increase in their numbers in recent decades.

The surge in global refugee numbers points to both a proliferation of conflicts and humanitarian crises, but also the failure of political leaders and policymakers to resolve the underlying and persistent issues driving migration.

WHO- Kuwait hosts dialogue on 'Health for All'



World Health Organization (WHO) office in Kuwait hosted a multi-stakeholder strategic dialogue on achieving health and wellbeing of all under the theme of 'Health for All; a whole of society approach to enhancing health ecosystems', on 14 December.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Assad Hafeez, WHO Representative to the State of Kuwait said "WHO's thirteenth general program of work (GPW13) prioritizes health and wellbeing. Here in Kuwait, we are working with the Ministry of Health and all of society, to ensure that SDG3 on good health and wellbeing are a reality for all."

Valuing the role the Government plays in supporting WHO global activities, Dr. Hafeez added, "The State of Kuwait has a longstanding humanitarian culture that continues to promote health for all both

at home and abroad. Through WHO's collaboration with Kuwait Fund, we are bridging critical health system gaps and supporting primary health care (PHC) facilities in low-income countries around the world." Achieving the targets of GPW13, to ensure health and wellbeing for all, requires that all aspects of society get involved in building the health ecosystem. WHO has a longstanding, multifaceted collaboration with Kuwait aimed at improving health outcomes both domestically and globally. In Kuwait, the Ministry of Health leads this domestic ecosystem by defining health and wellbeing targets in line with Kuwait's national development plan, as well as regional and global health targets.

Ensuring that this ecosystem can achieve Kuwait's health targets, requires establishing the right multisectoral mechanisms and



Dr. Assad Hafeez

policies that will enable whole of society involvement and coordination. Outside Kuwait, WHO works with Kuwait Fund to bolster health ecosystems by providing critical support to countries to plug systems

gaps and save lives. These combined efforts reflect Kuwait's commitment to health and improving the state of the world.

The 'Health for All' multi-stakeholder dialogue is an opportunity to reflect on the positive impact of the WHO-Kuwait collaboration, as well as opportunities for the future. The event convened Government and industry leaders, as well as country representatives, to share good practices, and build further support for health as a national, regional, and global priority.

It is noteworthy to mention that WHO Kuwait is currently leading an extensive role in supporting Kuwait to reach all health-related SDGs targets. The Kuwait Ministry of Health is working with WHO Country Office in a whole-of-society effort to bolster the health ecosystem and promote health for all and by all.

City Clinic Group opens fifth branch in Khaitan

The City Clinic Group opened their fifth branch in Khaitan on 16th December at 5.15 pm. The Clinic was inaugurated by Mr. Dhawi Jalwi Al Otaiby, Mayor of Khaitan in the presence of Dr. Daifullah Bu Ramiah, Ex MP Kuwait guest of honor, Managing Director, City Clinic group Mr. Naushad, Mr. Haris (LuLu), Dr. Yakob Abdul Karim Al Lahou, Mr. Omar Al Qina, Mr. Abdul Aziz Al Ghareeb, Mr. Mohammed Rafi Al Awadhi, other dignitaries, friends and City Clinic family members.

The inauguration day cake was cut by Mr. Dhawi Jalwi Al Otaiby, Mayor of Khaitan after which the dignitaries were taken on facility rounds. We are fully operational from today, 17.12.2022 from 6am to 11pm with all specialties under



one roof- General Practitioners, Internal Medicine, Gynaecology, ENT, dental, Orthopedics etc.

The lab and pharmacy are fully equipped with experienced staff. We also have facilities for x-ray and ultrasound.

We have well experienced Doctors, Nurses paramedical and reception staff who can converse in all languages including Arabic.

As part of the inauguration 1000 free health packages have been announced, you can be reached on 1880020 by call or by Whatsapp. Several packages have been booked. Few slots are still available. Please utilize this golden opportunity. We look forward to serving the Khaitan community by providing affordable health care to all who come to our facility.

Grand Mosque prepares to receive worshipers in Ramadan



Minister of Justice, Minister of Awqaf, and Minister of State for Integrity Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Majed paid a surprise visit to the Grand Mosque to see the status of the mosque and its activities.

During the visit he was briefed on the Grand Mosque's preparations for the blessed month of Ramadan for this year 1444.

During his tour, the minister was also briefed on the ongoing maintenance work in the mosque, stressing the concerted efforts of the

ministry in all its sectors to prepare the Grand Mosque to receive worshipers for the blessed month of Ramadan this year.

At the end of his tour, Al-Majed said the Grand Mosque provides a religious atmosphere for worshipers and visitors to the Grand Mosque especially foreign visitors.

The director of the Grand Mosque, Ali Shaddad, gave an extensive explanation of the condition of the mosque and its needs, as well as the preparations for the month of Ramadan.

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- Friday Dinner: 7pm to 10:30pm

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Ala Carte Menu

- From 12:30pm to 10 pm

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DEALING WITH THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait



The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity – The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram: hello_hermoine

Nothing can really prepare you for the death of a family member. The sadness, grief, and heartache can be overwhelming. Most people experience intense emotions, even when the death is expected. Many people will initially feel numb after first learning of a death; however, there is no actual order to the grieving process.

Bereavement is not just limited to emotional responses either. Grief can also trigger physical reactions in your body, such as weight and appetite changes, difficulty sleeping, and aches and pains. Some common emotions and physical symptoms also include feeling numb, shock or disbelief, Sadness or depression, tiredness and loss of energy, difficulty concentrating, feeling frightened, helpless or lonely, and not accepting that the person is really gone.

Indian national, Zeon Sequeira explains his experience of losing his hero and best friend. "Losing my father itself hurt so badly...My father was on life support during the last 24 hours of his life. The doctors told us they tried their best and couldn't do anything else. So I stood there by his side,

watching my mother and sister pray and cry for him to return to us as I watched his heartbeat drop. And just like that, in a moment, I lost my father...I felt emptiness. Helplessness. Sadness beyond anything I had ever experienced in life. None of my past heartbreaks would ever prepare me for a loss of this magnitude. It was done. I touched his face and held it for a bit as I came to terms with the fact that I would never sit and have another conversation with him, nor would I see him smile again."

Doctors classify grief into two types: acute and complicated. Most people experience acute distress in the first 6-12 months after a loss, and it gradually resolves. Some experience complicated grief that lasts longer than 12 months.

Complicated grief occurs when grief worsens over time, and you cannot move forward or resume your daily life and activities. It includes things like painful, hard-to-control emotions such as guilt, anger, or bitterness, being preoccupied with memories, thoughts, or pictures of the deceased person that might interfere with joining in on activities or other relationships, and having a hard time getting back to a sense of purpose, or joy in life.

"Grief is a normal response to loss. It becomes abnormal when people refuse to grieve or are unable to find someone who cares," says Professor of Professional Counseling, Dr. Bill Buker. There are things you can do to help you cope with your loss, as well as people and professionals who can support you through your bereavement. An excellent place to start is to seek support from others.

When you lose someone close to you,

it's normal to want to cut yourself off from others and retreat into your shell. But this is no time to be alone. Even when you cannot talk about your loss, being around others who care about you can provide comfort and support. Accept emotional and practical support from others.

Author and Director of the Center for Life Transition, Alan D. Wolfelt, describes six steps to loss which include acknowledging the reality of the failure, feeling the pain of the loss, remembering the loss, developing a new self-identity, searching for meaning and receiving ongoing support from others.

"Instead of encouraging mourners to express themselves, our culture's unstated rules would have them avoid their hurt and 'be strong'. But grief is not a disease. Instead, it is the normal, healthy process of embracing the mystery of the death of someone loved. If mourners see themselves as active participants in their healing, they will experience a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in life," says Dr. Wolfelt.



Other steps include not making big decisions in the first 12 months. The death of a loved one can cause a lot of upheaval in your life, so it is best to keep everything else as normal as possible. Avoid making significant changes or big life decisions, such as moving, remarrying, changing jobs, or having another child. Give yourself time to adjust to your loss. Routines, prayer, and connecting with God can also significantly help. Experts also say that pursuing your hobbies and sports can bring you a sense of purpose and comfort following the upheaval of bereavement.

"Creating healthy habits and any form



of exercise to your daily routine while you're grieving or dealing with loss can help massively. Any exercise, from walking to group classes, is therapy for the mind. Exercise releases serotonin known as the 'feel good hormone,' which can help relieve stress and anger and stave off anxiety and depression," explains Health and Fitness expert Daniel Costello.

Finding little ways to celebrate your loved one's life can also help keep their memory alive and comfort you as you move through the grieving process. Simple acts like lighting a candle, visiting a favorite place of your loved one, or planting flowers or a tree in their memory can be enriching and help with the healing process. Last but not least, it is essential to take care of yourself. Grief can take its toll on your physical and mental Health. You must eat and sleep well and get plenty of exercise.

The intense emotions you are dealing with can impact your immune system, affect your diet and sleep, and take a heavy toll on your overall mental and physical health. Immersing yourself in nature or spending time in green spaces can be a calming, soothing experience when grieving. Also, learn to be patient with yourself if you have difficult days. It can take months or even years to absorb a significant loss and accept that your life has changed forever. Understandably, you never stop missing your loved one, but the pain does ease in time and eventually allows you to continue with your life.

"Family and friends were the most important factors that helped me with my grieving process. I started hearing stories about my father from different family members, friends, and even random strangers about how he lived his life - selfless generosity and compassion for everyone around him. One of the most comforting ways in which I choose to heal is by maintaining a journal and writing about him, everything I remember about him so that when I am old, and my memory is weak, I can continue reading about his life from the eyes of my inner child that will always love and miss him," concludes Sequeira.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Food Security Is National Security



Hippolyte Fofack

Chief Economist and Director of Research at the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank).



Despite containing 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land, Africa has been a net food importer for decades. According to the most recent estimates, food imports are the biggest budget item for many countries across the continent. Amid surging food prices and an appreciating US dollar, Africa's food bill has soared as well, undermining African countries' economic growth, debt sustainability, and political stability.

According to the Brookings Institution, Africa spent around \$43 billion on food imports in 2019. Due to the current inflationary environment, most recent estimates are probably higher, especially in a region where high import dependence exacerbates the pass-through from global to local food prices. The soaring dollar, driven by the Federal Reserve's interest-rate hikes, has depleted African countries' hard-earned foreign-exchange reserves and led to sharp increases in their debt-servicing costs, heightening the risk of a continent-wide insolvency crisis.

At the same time, the supply-chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by the war in Ukraine have highlighted the potential costs of Africa's reliance on food imports. Food security is, after all, national security. African countries have learned this the hard way over the past two and

and fertilizer. For example, the two countries supplied 24 percent of globally traded wheat in 2020. And according to WTO estimates, the two countries accounted for 30 percent of the continent's total wheat imports in the lead-up to the outbreak of the war in 2022.

Heightened geopolitical tensions have stoked fears that the current supply-chain disruptions will become a more prominent, and permanent, risk, leading countries to embrace industrial policies and accelerate the shift to sustainable, self-reliant food systems. The United States, for example, has introduced policies aimed at reshoring the production of automobiles, semiconductors, and other manufactured goods.

Similarly, many African governments have increased efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. Policymakers are hoping that the African Continental Free Trade Area, established in 2018, can provide the economies of scale and productivity gains needed to boost domestic food production and reduce the region's vulnerability to external shocks.

Egypt, which in 2021 relied on both Russia and Ukraine for almost 77 percent of total wheat imports, is a case in point. Its government has provided fiscal incentives, including raising procurement prices, to increase domestic wheat production enough to meet at least 70 percent of domestic consumption. Preliminary estimates of the effectiveness of such policies seem promising, with some forecasts showing that Africa is set to produce 30.5 million metric tons of wheat this fiscal year, an increase of more than 18 percent from 2021.

The same goes for fertilizers. Before the war in Ukraine, countries such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Mauritania imported 20-50 percent of their fertilizers from Russia. This dependence on imports has stifled domestic agriculture; while global fertilizer use averaged 137 kilograms per hectare, the average across Africa was a dismal 20 kilograms per hectare in 2018.

But African businesses and governments have since taken steps to expand domestic production. The industrial conglomerate Dangote Group, for example, opened the world's second-largest fertilizer-production facility earlier this year in Lagos, Nigeria. The new facility is expected to produce three million metric tons of low-cost, nitrogen-based urea. The Dangote Group is also building another Nigerian plant near Port Harcourt. And in Morocco, the state-owned OCP Group is working with other African governments and financial institutions to build fertilizer plants across the continent. Next year, OCP plans to begin building a \$2.4 billion fertilizer facility that will employ Ethiopian natural gas.

The success of these import-substitution policies will have significant implications for the region. Several African countries have enough raw materials to produce the fertilizers needed to meet growing regional (and global) demand.

Expanding production capacity will promote the commodity-based industrialization model, which will also help diversify Africa's sources of growth, reducing the continent's unhealthy dependence on commodity-price cycles and strengthening its resilience to global shocks.

Given Africa's projected population growth, agriculture and agribusiness could become growth industries, creating jobs in regions where unemployment has been chronically high for decades and accelerating the continent's economic transformation. The growth of agribusinesses and rising fertilizer production

will also boost productivity and reduce post-harvest losses.

Raising African farmers' yields and boosting agricultural productivity is crucial to achieving self-sufficiency in food production. These policies will also close large and growing holes in most countries' balance of payments, strengthen macroeconomic stability, and put the region on a path toward fiscal health and increased debt sustainability. But Africa must aim higher. The continent has the land and climate needed to become the world's breadbasket, and a geopolitical force to be reckoned with.

“

Hopes are that the African Continental Free Trade Area, established in 2018, can provide the economies of scale and productivity gains needed to boost domestic food production and reduce the region's vulnerability to external shocks.

”

a half years, as supply-chain bottlenecks and protectionist policies have reduced access to key agricultural commodities and led to dramatic price increases.

Earlier this year, the price of wheat futures at the Chicago Board of Trade reached a record of \$14.25 per bushel, almost double the price in late December 2021. Fertilizer prices have also increased sharply, as the average prices for major variants (including diammonium phosphate, triple superphosphate, urea, and potassium chloride) more than doubled year on year. Overall, the World Trade Organization's fertilizer-price index rose by more than 100 percent between the first quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.

Although Russia and Ukraine account for less than 3 percent of global trade and around 1.7 percent of total African trade, both have served as the world's, and Africa's, main source of wheat

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Nature's High Returns



Mari Pangestu

*Managing Director of
Development Policy and
Partnerships at the World Bank.*

The mega-challenges engulfing the world today, from COVID-19 to climate change, have highlighted the interdependencies between people, planet, and the economy. As we chart a course to reignite global growth and drive green, resilient, and inclusive development, we must not ignore these interlinkages. Nature — meaning biodiversity and the services that healthy ecosystems provide — is central to this endeavor, especially in developing countries, where poor people in rural areas tend to rely heavily on nature's services and are the most vulnerable to its depletion.

As the international community gathers in Montreal for COP15, the United Nations summit on biodiversity, we must reaffirm the necessity of investing in nature, in tandem with climate action. After all, half of world GDP is generated by sectors — from agriculture and lumber to fisheries — that are moderately or highly dependent on ecosystems, and two-thirds of food crops rely at least partly on animal pollination.

But these vital natural assets are increasingly compromised. Nearly one million species of plants and animals are on the brink of extinction, and 60-70 percent of the world's ecosystems are being degraded faster than they can recover. According to World Bank estimates, low-income countries could lose around 10 percent of their GDP annually by 2030, even if ecosystem collapse is confined to just a few services, such as wild pollination, food from marine fisheries, and timber from native forests. Nature loss is also closely connected to climate change. We now know that the two

crises are reinforcing each other, and with potentially dire implications for the health of ecosystems globally. To fight climate change, we need strong, vibrant forests and healthy oceans to absorb carbon dioxide; but climate change itself is jeopardizing these systems.

Preserving biodiversity and ecosystems is the key to unlocking economic opportunities that can help communities thrive. Estimates show that adopting more sustainable ways of producing food, building cities and infrastructure, and generating energy could lead to US\$10.1 trillion annually in new business opportunities, creating 395 million

jobs by 2030. The ocean economy alone has the potential to double (to \$3 trillion) by 2030. But to tackle both biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, climate and nature goals need to be better coordinated. Globally, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change need to become more closely aligned in their processes and ambitions. Likewise, countries must do more to harmonize their Nationally Determined Contributions (emissions-reduction targets) and their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. And at the local level, communities need to be supported with investments in nature-based solutions such as forests, which help with both climate mitigation and adaptation.

All this underscores the need for a whole-of-economy approach, engaging central

governments, finance and sectoral ministries, and others to support reforms that address market, policy, and institutional failures. Otherwise, misaligned policy incentives will continue to put a negative price tag on nature's services. As matters stand, governments are spending at least \$800 billion per year on subsidies (for fossil fuel, agriculture, and so forth) that are potentially harmful to nature. Worse, environmental policy has been siloed off from development policies and strategies, with its implementation often confined to a single ministry, despite the systemic risks posed by nature loss.

need to take a holistic approach that involves both greening finance (directing financial flows from harmful projects to nature-positive ones) and financing green (mobilizing greater investment in conservation, restoration, and sustainable resource use).

To that end, the World Bank Group is supporting developing countries as they integrate nature, climate, and development issues in their policy design and decision-making. We are undertaking projects that invest directly in the conservation of species and natural habitats and supporting livelihoods that rely on natural capital such as forests, fisheries, and agriculture.

As the largest multilateral financier of biodiversity, the World Bank offers a range of financial services and tools to promote green investments. For example, Seychelles launched its first sovereign blue bond (which supports sustainable marine and fisheries projects) with Bank support. The Bank also introduced the \$150 million 'Rhino Bond', a first-of-its-kind financial instrument, tied to clear conservation targets, that channels private-sector investments to protect black rhinos in South Africa.

PROBLUE, a trust fund supported by 14 donors, has provided almost \$100 million in grant financing since 2018, helping to unlock \$4 billion in Bank financing for projects from West Africa to East Asia. The Bank is also working with countries to make global finance more sustainable, including by supporting the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, which seeks to increase transparency and integrate nature-based considerations into financial decision-making.

Given the strong linkages between poverty, climate change, and biodiversity, preventing further nature loss is not only the right thing to do; it also makes good economic and development sense. We must continue to expand investments in protecting nature and producing more sustainably. The future of development depends on it.

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At COP15, countries will seek an agreement on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which could spur the comprehensive shift that is needed. Comprising a wide range of ambitious targets, the framework would address the triple environmental crises of nature loss, climate change, and pollution, while also helping to alleviate poverty. But ensuring its effectiveness will require filling outstanding knowledge and methodology gaps, collecting more data, and devising new tools and metrics to integrate diverse sectors and to quantify the benefits of action.

We also must do more to close the biodiversity financing gap, which is estimated to be as large as \$700 billion per year over the next decade. Bringing in more and better private finance is especially important. We



'Exercise snacks' for busy schedules

As the holiday season approaches many people tend to go into a 'relax mode' with regard to their diet plans and exercise regimen. However, health experts say that rather than forgetting fitness altogether it would be better to continue exercises during this period, especially considering the additional calories one is likely to intake from copious festive spreads.

New studies by researchers at the University of Colorado in the United States, as well as by physiologists elsewhere, show that even if one cannot find the time or inclination to undertake regular full-fledged exercises, engaging in short bursts of vigorous activity, often referred to as 'exercise snacks', can help maintain health. And interestingly, these brief bouts of exercise do not have to involve weights or other equipment, even undertaking household chores, playing with the kids outdoors can count as a workout if done correctly.

Many people will avoid conventional exercise, including a regular time-consuming

exercise regimen that could involve time at a gym, or walking or running that involves a large time commitment. On the other hand, when exercise can be taken in small bites of only a few minutes and does not require any special equipment, it makes it easier for people to stick with it.

Emerging evidence also reveals that short bursts of vigorous activity throughout the day can be just as beneficial to health as setting aside a dedicated time slot to engage in exercises. For example, a 2019 study found that workouts lasting less than 15 minutes long, which included a warm-up, cool-down, and less than 5 minutes of vigorous exercise, were capable of improving blood sugar control as well as heart and lung function, both of which contribute to reducing cardiometabolic risk.

More recently, a study published in January 2022 found that performing short bouts, of a minute or less, of vigorous exercise at intervals throughout the day was a feasible, well-tolerated, and time-efficient approach to improving heart and lung health and reducing the impact of a sedentary

lifestyle on cardiometabolic health.

To find out if the activity you are doing counts as vigorous exercise, you do not need any sophisticated devices. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all you have to do is find out if the activity you are engaged in leads to a situation where you are not able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath.

Researchers say that shorter, more vigorous exercise sessions work for a number of reasons. Firstly, even short bouts of high intensity exercise have health benefits that add up. So exercise snacks can directly improve people's health. Second, it is proven that prolonged sedentary time is bad for our health, so exercise snacks which are performed throughout the day are likely also beneficial by breaking up sedentary time. Lastly and most importantly, exercise snacks can easily fit into our busy modern lives.

The first step to getting started with 'exercise snacks' is to make sure that you are healthy enough for even short bouts of vigorous exercise. People who have cardiovascular diagnoses, such as coronary artery disease, will need to check with their physician before they begin any vigorous physical activity. If you do not have any medical condition that would need a physician's approval to engage in, then it is easy to pick and try out any of the quick workouts from the hundreds of 10-14 minute exercise routines that are available online.

For those who may be looking for more of a structured workout in the beginning, they could get into high intensity interval training (HIIT) classes. These sessions



are fun, expend a lot of energy, and also provide moments of rest and recovery between different training bouts. It is also a time-effective exercise while, at the same time, supporting strength and increasing your strength and endurance.

However, it is not necessary to take a HIIT class or even seek out a specific routine, as long as what you choose is any type of vigorous exercise. Even ordinary house chores are a great way to get your blood pumping. Among such non-traditional exercise activities that are still considered as 'vigorous activity' are, sweeping the floor, moving the garden, washing the car, walking up and down stairs, or even playing with kids.

Any moderate physical activity can progress toward high intensity activity depending on the effort exerted during the session. However, the most important element is to find an activity that you enjoy doing for short bursts of time. Regardless of the type of workout, the great thing about 'exercise snacks' is that they come in small packs.

Green Mediterranean diet reduces visceral fat

Unlike subcutaneous fat that is found under the skin and can be felt by pinching around your belly, visceral fat is hidden deep in the body and wraps around your abdominal organs such as the stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas and kidney. Even people who flout flat 'six-pack' abdominal muscles could have excess visceral fat. Other than doing an abdominal scan there is no other way to find out for sure whether you have visceral fat. However, too much subcutaneous fat could be an indication of too much visceral fat.

Excess visceral fat can harm your health and lead to many issues, including heart disease, diabetes, and dementia. One effective way to reduce visceral fat is by adopting healthier eating habits. Eating a Mediterranean diet (MED), which has been ranked five times in a row as the best diet in the world for overall health by nutrition experts, has so far been considered a good way to reduce visceral fat.



Recently, researchers have found that a variant of MED, referred to as 'Green MED', has the potential to reduce visceral fat even more than a regular MED. The green MED diet includes more plant-based foods and less meat intake than the traditional MED diet. The new study found that while a healthy diet reduced visceral fat by 4.5 percent, and a MED intake reduced it by 7 percent, following a green MED led to a reduction of visceral fat by 14 percent.

A key difference between the green MED and traditional MED is that the 'green' version emphasizes plant-based proteins more than the traditional MED diet. Whereas the classic version of the diet includes red and processed meats occasionally, green MED avoids these meats totally.

Another difference is that the green MED diet involves consuming green tea, walnuts, and Mankai duckweed (a high protein

aquatic plant) daily due to the high content of healthful polyphenols found in these foods. The green MED also involves more structure, as it has a set amount of calories, protein, and specific foods to eat daily, whereas the Mediterranean diet is more generalized.

While both versions of the MED diet contain anti-inflammatory and antioxidant foods that reduced risk of chronic disease, lower cholesterol, and healthier blood pressure levels, green MED also offers additional benefits, including decreased waist circumference, reduced LDL (bad) cholesterol, and lower diastolic blood pressure.

The additional benefits of green MED could be attributed to the aquatic duckweed plant, which served as a meat substitute in the study. The duckweed plant is high in bioavailable protein, iron, B12, vitamins, minerals, and polyphenols — compounds such as flavonoids and phenolic acid that are found in various plant-based foods — all of which are known for their health benefits. Participants in the green MED group had higher levels of polyphenols in their plasma and urine probably due to the consumption of polyphenol-rich green tea, walnuts, and duckweed powder.

Polyphenols have potential antioxidant and antiinflammatory roles in the body, and have been associated with the prevention and management of several diseases, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease.

According to researchers, the effects of polyphenols in the green MED diet can induce a higher breakdown of fatty acids and higher energy expenditure that may eventually affect the amount of fat accumulation. Although more research would be needed, the green MED has the potential to play a role in treating obesity and promoting weight loss.

The high amount of polyphenols in a green MED diet is likely contributing to reduced visceral fat through several mechanisms, including by blocking fat absorption after eating, increasing the uptake of glucose into the muscles, and reducing chronic inflammation.

Nutritionists recommend that rather than go for polyphenol supplements, it is more beneficial to eat polyphenol rich foods such as berries, nuts, artichokes, red onion, spinach, flaxseed, olives, herbs and spices, as well as in beverages such as coffee, tea, and cocoa.



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Human health at mercy of Climate Change



Naveen Rao and Eloise Todd

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A day before the latest United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) began, a group of global experts convened by The Lancet published a report about the adverse health effects of climate change. Their conclusion was as jarring as it was straightforward: human health is at the mercy of fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, health remained at the bottom of the priority list at COP27. To be sure, some important health-focused conversations took place at the World Health Organization's side pavilion. These discussions were particularly timely, given the current surge of COVID-19, fueled by the newest Omicron subvariants, in Europe and the United States. But, beyond a blink-and-you-miss-it mention in the preamble, the COP27 declaration makes no substantive mention of the climate-health nexus.



It is a glaring omission. The connection between climate and health is deep and multifaceted. Consider, for example, how warming temperatures and unprecedented flooding have encouraged the spread of mosquitoes — carriers of diseases like dengue fever, malaria, and the Zika virus — well beyond their traditional breeding grounds. If nothing is done, Zika will threaten an additional 1.3 billion people by 2050, and dengue

fever will affect a whopping 60% of the world's population by 2080.

Similarly, climate-driven migration and shrinking animal habitats increase the risk that viruses and bacteria will jump from animal hosts to humans — just as SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, likely did. This makes another pandemic increasingly likely.

Global warming is also worsening air pollution and, in turn, chronic non-communicable diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Arvind Kumar, who founded the Lung Care Foundation in Delhi, laments that practically everyone in India has the health profile of a smoker, simply because of air pollution. In fact, nearly 1.7 million Indians die every year from its effects.

The people most affected by these climate-related health issues have often done the least to create them. Many residents of Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Pakistan do not even own cars. Yet they are suffering from the floods, cyclones, and rising sea levels that have resulted from developed-country emissions.

Fortunately, key lessons from the pandemic response can help us tackle the health challenges that climate change raises. For starters, we need a revolution in data collection and analysis. Global systems to capture and share relevant data progressed significantly during the pandemic, but we are still using only a small share of the information generated. Worse, the data tend to be divided into siloes.

To get a more complete picture of the health effects of climate change, we must integrate clinical, epidemiological, and genomic data from health systems with diverse non-health data, including on weather patterns, wastewater surveillance, consumer behavior, and even social media and mobility. New open-source platforms like Global.health are an important step in the right direction, but much more must be done.

Another lesson from the pandemic is that, to avoid slipping back into the cycle of panic and neglect, any resilience agenda requires sustainable financing. When COVID-19 emerged, scores of global actors, particularly in the arena of vaccines research, acted with unprecedented speed and coordination.

But while large amounts of funding supported short-term initiatives, not nearly enough investment has been channeled subsequently toward pandemic prevention and preparedness. Likewise, while governments have responded to some of the immediate dramatic effects of climate change, such as natural disasters, interventions to address the climate crisis remain meager.

As a first step, world leaders should back the Bridgetown Agenda, which seeks to reform global finance for the twenty-first century, including by ensuring that it supports climate action and pandemic prevention. They should also take

every opportunity to connect climate and health issues in international forums, including at this month's UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal.

A final critical lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that an effective response depends on community trust and engagement. As with face masks and vaccines, community-based organizations and civil society will play a pivotal role in determining whether there is broad public buy-in for a bold agenda that covers both climate and health.

This will require a comprehensive, policy-shaping discussion that establishes a common language and shared intentions across sectors. Where should we aim to prevent the health consequences associated with climate change,

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and where should we mitigate them? Where should we adapt to the health effects of a warming planet, and why is an adaptation agenda becoming increasingly urgent?

In October, the UN confirmed that the world is far from meeting the goal, established in the 2015 Paris climate agreement, of limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and we may instead be headed to a catastrophic 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century. As the United Kingdom's COP27 representative Alok Sharma noted after the conference, the 1.5°C goal is now on “life support.”

Concerted action must be taken to revive it — and that starts with recognizing that climate and health are part of the same conversation. They can and must be tackled together.



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