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THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

In his keynote address to the World Government Summit 2023 held recently in Dubai, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah stated that in order to address current and future global challenges, manage crises, and diversify economies, governments need to seek support of epistemic modes of governance. Pointing out that the world was going through a critical period that required reliable knowledge-based governance, the premier called for a way of governing that was capable of providing exceptional and efficient management of any given situation, whether it was improving economies or handling natural and man-made crises.

Epistemic governance refers to the cognitive and knowledge-related paradigms that underlie



efficient and effective governance. In Kuwait, where important decisions are often distorted by political inclinations and compulsions, appeasements and other non-epistemic factors, pivoting to an epistemic model of governing

would entail drastic changes to the existing socio-political landscape. But, considering the prevailing political milieu, is implementing such a radical shift in governance feasible, let alone possible in Kuwait any time soon?

This is not just a rhetorical question, or a topic of interest only to political analysts, social scientists, or policymakers, answering this is equally pertinent to ordinary citizens and everyone with a stake in the country's future prosperity and well-being. Any prospective shift to a more efficient and effective form of governance and governing will require everyone involved to engage in an in-depth examination and deliberation on where we are now, and where we need to be in order to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for Kuwait and its people.

Analysts and international policy institutions have noted that knowledge-based governance and innovative policies are needed to support, if not replace, the current approach, where policies and plans currently rely largely on stifling bureaucratic or technocratic ideas and inputs.

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Indian Embassy celebrates International Year of Millets

In recognition of the UN-declared International Year of Millets 2023 (IYM2023), the Indian Embassy organized a week-long 'Millet Campaign', the finale of which was held at the embassy premises on 21 February under the title, 'Millets for Sustainable Development'.

Indian Ambassador designate H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika welcomed all the distinguished guests including Maazen Essa Al-Essa, Undersecretary at the Crown Prince Diwan who was the chief guest on the occasion. In his address to the gathering Ambassador Swaika extended his warm felicitations to the people and Government of Kuwait on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days of Kuwait.

"Small but mighty and full of promises for humanity's future, millets are a group of small grains that are nutritiously rich, drought tolerant and mostly grown in the arid and semi-arid regions of India and elsewhere. Millets are superior to wheat and rice as they are rich in protein, vitamins, and minerals," said the ambassador-designate.

He further added that realizing the importance of millets in ensuring food and nutrition security to the people of India, the Government of India had celebrated the year 2018 as the National Year of Millets. To further spread awareness about the potential of



millets among the global community, India had proposed at the 75th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session in March 2021 to celebrate the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets. The proposal was supported by more than 70 countries worldwide. He noted that as a steering committee member of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) India is leading the IYM2023 initiative globally.

The ambassador stressed that millets could be inextricably linked to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He further added that "Millets are good for our planet and for our people as well as for our palate. They are also good for producers where millets offer a climate resilient alternative to traditional resource intensive cropping patterns. For consumers,

they provide a nutritious product with taste. Millets are rich in fibers, minerals and have low glycemic index. They are also gluten free and are adaptable to all sorts of cuisines."

Detailing about the events held in conjunction with the 'Millets Week' campaign Ambassador Swaika stated that the week long campaign included a range of activities involving different stakeholders with several programs planned both by young children and adults to promote the awareness of millets. "In all of this, there was a learning opportunity for the young generation. They will live in a world different from ours, and I am glad they are also adding thoughts which are different from ours. I congratulate all the winners and more importantly all those who participated in the competitions and activities held during the Millets Week In Kuwait."

In conclusion, the ambassador stressed that millets could also be an important element of the India-Kuwait bilateral trade in foodgrains because India is a leading producer of different types of millets. "With greater awareness about the benefits and delicious recipes that could be prepared from millets, I am sure the demand for millets would also grow and its visibility in the shelves of all supermarkets in Kuwait."

Indian Doctors Forum (IDF) then put up a skit with the theme of millet and its advantages with Indian folk dance and music. Indian Chef Chaya Thakkar, who regularly shares her recipes in the weekly The Times Kuwait, also gave the invited guests a taste of millets with a variety of preparations.

The events during the day also included a quiz on millets and a display of 70 creative artworks made using millets, by the students of Indian schools on the themes of Millets for Sustainable Development, Millets for Taste and Nutrition and India-Kuwait Friendship. A Millets Exhibition, displaying the diversity of millets grown in different parts of India and their benefits, was held by Lulu Hypermarkets, Kuwait and Al-Hakimi Supermarket, Kuwait during this event. The Chief Guest and Ambassador also gave away prizes to the winners of various competitions held during the Millets Week in Kuwait.

Box Hill College organizes seminar on women's empowerment



As part of a series of talks being organized by Box Hill College, Kuwait to highlight the achievements of women in general and Kuwaiti women in particular, parliamentarian Alia Al-Khaled spoke about her personal experiences in her political and social career.

During the symposium, which is being held under the banner of 'Be Inspired, Be Engaged, Make a Difference', Ms. Al-Khaled highlighted some of the challenges facing women in general to reach their goals and ambitions. Kuwaiti women have historically been distinguished by their important roles in

the society over many decades, and currently they hold many leadership positions, whether in the field of business or in the field of politics, and have shown determination, real courage and high spirit in facing the challenges imposed by society, said Ms. Al-Khaled.

She also spoke about the role of Kuwaiti women in various aspects of life in the society overall and how they were able to stand prominently on the front lines of Kuwait in its recent history, whether during the invasion of Kuwait or during the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Al Khaled emphasized that women are

considered the soul of society and without them the society becomes unipolar, explaining that the development of women is crucial to eliminate the scourges of underdevelopment, especially since women are the measure and the basic criterion for the progress of human societies.

Over the coming period, Box Hill College Kuwait plans to host a series of talks with prominent Kuwait women in various industries who are role models in society and will help inspire its students on how to become leaders of tomorrow.

Philippine delegation holds discussion with PAM officials

A delegation from the Philippine Department of Labor that visited Kuwait last week to assess the situation of Filipino household service workers, met with representatives from the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) to discuss the conditions of the workers and the Authority's role in providing protection for them.

Officials from PAM are reported to have assured the delegation that it addresses complaints submitted by domestic workers or business owners, including issues related to payment, salaries, and passports. The Authority also provided information on the regulations and laws enforced in the country, particularly those related to protecting workers and providing them with shelter.

On the other hand, Bassam Al-Shammari, a specialist in domestic labor affairs, noted that the Philippine delegation was focused on the issue of workers holding passports and the deportation procedures that occur, as well as the reasons why workers often have to turn to their embassy, most of them are deported without receiving their passports.

The delegation also stressed the importance of adhering to the work contract agreed upon between the two countries and addressing any defects or problems that arise. Al-Shammari urged concerned government agencies to form a committee to work with the Philippine embassy and quickly address employment issues.



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UN-Habitat launches annual 'Greening Kuwait' campaign



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlement Program, recently launched the fourth iteration of 'Greening Kuwait' campaign, in cooperation with state-owned Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), and with active participation of scores of volunteers and several diplomatic missions accredited to Kuwait.

Speaking about the campaign, which aimed at planting 500 trees in Al-Abdaliyah natural reserve, the Deputy Head of the sub-regional office of UN-Habitat in Kuwait for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Qusai Al-Duaij, said that the choice of Al-Abdaliyah natural reserve by KOC reflected the commitment of the oil sector in Kuwait to environmental causes, and efforts to boost the country's carbon neutrality, as well as to battle desertification and combat climate change.

He noted that choosing February as the start of this annual campaign was to reflect the patriotism and love of the country on the occasion of Kuwait's upcoming National and Liberation Days. Elaborating on the type of trees planted, Al-Duaij emphasized that they were native to the desert environment of Kuwait and would fit in perfectly, adding that more than 45 diplomatic missions in Kuwait were taking part in the campaign.

Addressing the media and speaking on behalf of the diplomatic missions taking part in the campaign, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, said that the success of any environment greening campaign is a success to the entire world as it strives to achieve a better future for all of humanity.

Noting that since the inception of 'Greening Kuwait' campaign in 2019, the diplomatic

community along with the Tajikistan embassy had been active supporters of the initiative, he explained that the project focuses on greening open spaces in Kuwait with the aim of protecting towns and cities from dust storms, desertification and sand encroachments.



"We came here to raise sustainability awareness and encourage members of the public to increase Kuwait's resilience to combat climate change effects and help reduce the country's carbon footprint," said the ambassador, adding that the project would also contribute to improving public health in urbanized areas.

He also revealed that in a previous campaign, the Tajikistan embassy had imported several ornamental and fruit trees native to Tajikistan to be planted in Kuwait, and that it was a delight to witness that the trees had grown to yield fruits and were flourishing in Kuwait's environment. Ambassador Zubaydov further remarked, "The planting of trees from Tajikistan on Kuwait's soil was a symbol of the friendship and brotherhood between the two countries, and their shared vision on climate and environment issues."

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Need to address education, learning gaps, in Kuwait

Pointing to the glaring gaps that exist in education and learning in the country, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr. Khaled Mahdi said these shortcomings were reflected in the skill-gaps seen in the labor market.

Speaking during a symposium organized by the American International University in Kuwait, Dr. Mahdi noted that the learning gap in the country, which widened during

the COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in a situation where the average gap is currently close to six years. In other words, the learning level of a graduate at the twelfth grade in Kuwait's schools is equivalent to that of a seventh-grade student.

To address these gaps, Mahdi proposed the implementation of an education development strategy, which includes better and more efficient governance in the educational sector, curriculum



development, teacher licensing, and international standards.

He emphasized the importance of following up on the implementation of the strategy to assess progress. He also indicated that Kuwait's spending on education has a far lower return on investment than Finland, a country that spends an equivalent amount on education. He stressed the need to bridge gaps and overcome challenges such as educational loss and educational poverty.

Securitymen sentenced for assisting 'travel banned' to escape

The Criminal Court, headed by Counselor Abdullah Al-Othman, last week sentenced four employees of the Ministry of Interior and the Customs Administration to jail on charges related to the forgery of the ministry's electronic record and assisting individuals with travel bans against them to escape the country. The verdict also instructed that the four be dismissed from their jobs.

Besides the four sentenced, eight other individuals of unspecified nationality, who managed to cross the Salmi port despite being banned from traveling, were sentenced in absentia to six months of imprisonment with

labor and enforcement.

On another security-related news, statistics from the annual report provided by the Public Prosecution on its performance in 2022 showed that the number of instances where officials failed to implement judicial rulings amounted to 369, an increase of 21 percent on the figures a year earlier.

Other data provided by the prosecutor's office showed that there were 510 members employed in the Public Prosecution Service, and the total number of cases registered by the department reached 39,795 cases last year, an increase of 24 percent from 2021.

Among the major crime figures released by the Public Prosecution were that cases of forging official documents amounted to 611, an increase of 30 percent from a year earlier. The most number of crimes were recorded against juveniles, which reached 5,812 crimes, an increase of 10% from 2021 and the highest number recorded in Kuwait's history.

Meanwhile, domestic violence crimes amounted to 2,223 crimes, an increase of 42 percent; crimes associated with narcotics and psychotropic substances reached 2,687, an increase of 16 percent from 2021, and press, media and information technology crimes amounted to 3,086 crimes, an increase of 28 percent from 2021. A total of 38,120 defendants were brought before the Public Prosecution in 2022, among whom 60 percent were Kuwaitis, males accounted for over 89 percent of defendants, and the age group of 30-39 years were the most likely to commit crimes, with a rate of 26.8 percent.

The annual report also showed that the



Public Prosecution's completion rate of cases reached 93.8 percent, of which 60 percent were referred to criminal trial, 33.4 percent were decided to be filed, and 6.6 percent were referred for lack of jurisdiction, while the conviction rate in judicial rulings issued during 2022 for cases referred by the Public Prosecution to the courts was at the rate was at 88.7 percent.



UAE Exchange Centre opens new branch at Mahboula

UAE Exchange Centre, Kuwait, a leading remittance and foreign exchange brand in Kuwait, opened its newest branch in Kuwait at Mahboula on 20 February.

The new branch, located at Mahboula Block 2, was inaugurated by Managing Partner of the company Mohammad Humoud Al Muhareb Al Humoud, in the presence of General Manager E Krishna Kumar, Assistant General Manager

Corporate remittance services, Mobile application and web-based services, as well as the global remittance facilities like Western Union, Transfast, Instant Cash, I Pay services etc. with over 1,35,000 payout locations in more than 125 countries. "The aim of the company is to provide customer friendly, value added services, fulfill aspirations of employees; create sustained growth in revenue and profitability; serve the society and flourish in an environment of mutual trust and transparency," said Mr. Kumar.

The new branch is dedicated to our esteemed customers who have always supported the company to reach heights, stated Asst. General Manager HR and Training, Dhari Al Muhareb.

For his part, Mr. Engineer noted that the intention of UAE Exchange is to become the trusted neighborhood exchange partner for our customers and hence we have been incessantly spreading our branch networks nationwide, to get as close to customers as possible.

Presently UAE Exchange Centre, Kuwait has its presence in all the major and prime locations in Kuwait with more than 20 branches and mobile application facility. The newly opened branch will serve customers every day of the week from 8 am to 9 pm. More details are available on 1808800/ 97539215 (Direct/ Whatsapp).



Operations- Eric Engineer, other senior officials, staff members, special invitees, customers and media representatives.

UAE Exchange, with over 40 years of experience in foreign exchange and remittance industry, offers technologically backed high quality services such as Live & Flash remittances, SWIFT-Wire transfer services, E-wallet transfers,



City Centre Hosts National Day Event in Dasma

Kuwaiti-owned City Centre Hypermarkets held a family oriented National Day event this past February 25th in Dasma area at the Hassan Abul football field, located adjacent from City Centre Dasma. The event – held to celebrate Kuwait's National and Liberation Days, featured various family and kids activities as well as competitions and giveaways presented by City Centre.

Amongst the activities was a stunning display from the Kuwait Parrot Club, an initiative put together by Kuwaiti youth, which both impressed and entertained all the event-goers, from young ones to adults, as the parrots flew overhead, perched on visitors arms, and spread colorful joy in the event.

Another feature was the Q8 Owl club, featuring the mysterious yet captivating owls, as well as one of Kuwait's national birds – the falcon – which the crowd enjoyed interacting and snapping memorable shots with.

The highlight of the event was dually split between the traditional Kuwaiti band – playing tunes and beats synonymous with Kuwaiti heritage and folklore – as well as the various competitions and giveaways presented by TV

personality – Abdulaziz Darweesh. There were national dress competitions, spin the wheel challenge, and general trivia related to Kuwaiti heritage as well as City Centre's history in Kuwait from its establishment in 1999.

The National Day event demonstrated City Centre's commitment to cater to the community and build strong ties with young Kuwaiti initiatives, as well as celebrating key occasions with its customer base, invited to attend across its 13 stores, with emphasis on it's Dasma customers, as the celebration was in the heart of their community.



KFMBC marks invasion with new bread packing

Kuwait Flour Mills & Bakeries Company (KFMBC), formerly Kuwait Flour Mills, marked the vicious invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91 by reproducing and repacking bread in a special packing to recall and remind people of this tragic event in Kuwait's recent history.

During the darkest days of the occupation, Kuwaiti and expatriate staff who worked in the bakeries, had to improvise and use whatever material available back then to produce bread, including adding a combination of bran, coarsely ground wheat, and flour.

Speaking on the occasion of Kuwait's

National and Liberation Day celebrations last week, the company's CEO Mutlaq Al-Zayed said that the '1990 bread bag' was a representation of Kuwait's stance against the brutal Iraqi aggression.

He affirmed that the company was operated back then by staff that included citizens and loyal residents, revealing that in the initial weeks of the invasion, bakeries worked at full capacity 24 hours and seven days a week.

The ordeal was tough due to the lack of technical staff that made sure that production lines went smoothly without a hitch, and also the materials involved in

bread production were limited, he said while adding that back then people had to wait in long lines before getting the much coveted bag of bread,

Al-Zayed stressed that the company decided to commemorate the memory of the heroes who got involved in the mission to cover the needs of the people during invasion, and hence, the idea of the 1990 bread bag came to fruition.

The Kuwait flour mills company was established in 1961 and was incorporated into the Kuwait Bakeries company in 1988, becoming one of the biggest food companies in the Gulf region.



IWG delegation visits Tareq Rajab Museum

A delegation from the International Women's Group (IWG) headed by the group's president, Ghada Shawky, wife of the ambassador of Egypt, and accompanied by the Ambassador of Romania H.E. Mugurel Stanescu, last week visited the Tareq Rajab Museum of Islamic Calligraphy located in Jabriya.

The delegation was received by Tareq Rajab, grandson of the museum's founders, Tareq and Jehan Rajab. Mr. Rajab conducted the group on an informative tour of the museum, explaining the history of the museum and its magnificent contents including holy coverings, manuscripts,



miniatures, ceramics, metal work, glass and jade, wood and stone carvings. The delegation marveled at the range, quality and beauty of the outstanding pieces and were informed about the evolution of the Arabic script through history, with some manuscripts on display dating back to the 6th century.

At the end of the visit, and on behalf of the group's board and members, Mrs. Shawky, presented an honorary shield to the museum and a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Rajab for providing an outstanding tour of the museum collections.

BSK, Sunshine Kindergarten celebrate National Day



British School of Kuwait (BSK) and The Sunshine Kindergarten (TSK) celebrated the country's National Day and Liberation Day anniversaries with great pomp and joy. The celebrations were held in the presence of its founder and General Director, Vera Al Mutawa; Chairman, Sadiq Al Mutawa; School Principal, Emma Bowie as well as other officials, teachers, and our wonderful parents of students in the school.

An atmosphere of joy and happiness permeated the celebrations, which were being held face to face for the first time in three years. They featured many activities, events, and well-known musical presentations which were beautifully prepared and directed by Primary Arabic Coordinator Hebat Allah Gomaa and superbly performed on stage by the students.

Students from TSK took to the stage to show their wonderful outfits and patriotically waved the Kuwait flag to the large audience of parents, while students from various classes of BSK presented several beautifully choreographed dances expressing loyalty to the homeland, as well as fusing the country's remarkable past and the spirit of the present and the future. In addition to the wonderful musical performances, there was a 'Sheela' presentation of girls swaying with their hair.

Students also showcased their skills in acting by presenting a number of sketches to the audience. A sports sketch was presented by one of the brightest stars in the Kuwaiti and Gulf Football arena, Jassim Yacoub. An artistic sketch featuring the hugely successful actor and comedian, Abdul Hussein Abdulreda provided laughter. Another was about the great astronomer Saleh al-Ajiri and to crown the event, yet another highlighted the role of Kuwaiti women in liberation. Both events along with the activities taking place inside the classrooms brought together the community to celebrate their love for Kuwait.



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Thought for the week

“To ask what causes poverty is like asking what causes cold. It is the absence of energy. Similarly, poverty is the absence of wealth. We should ask, 'what are the causes of wealth?'

- Madsen Pirie
British Researcher and Author

Six surprising reasons for not losing weight



Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy

Many people often complain about trying different types of diets but that they do not work and do not lead to desired weight losses.

We also hear that eating late at night, increasing the food portions, and not moving a lot, are directly linked to gaining or at least not losing weight.

But do you know that there are other reasons that stabilize your weight and interfere with the kilograms you want to get rid of? Here are six other reasons.

Thyroid hormones: Classified as Hypothyroidism (that leads to a very low metabolism) and hyperthyroidism (that leads to a very high metabolism). If you are dieting, exercising and not losing weight, make sure to visit your endocrinologist, it might be related to your hypothyroid hormone which lowers your metabolism and causes weight gain. Alroxine is given to people suffering from this problem

Depression: Depression affects your weight as well. It increases cortisol levels (stress hormone) which increases adrenaline levels in your body which in return increases insulin levels. The high level of insulin in the blood causes hunger and increases appetite and will force your liver to make extra fat from the extra calories you consume.

Low testosterone levels in men: Testosterone is the growth hormone for men, in other words, it is responsible for making men 'manly'. The main reason for a drop down in testosterone its level is belly fat in men which increases with age. When testosterone level is low, the muscles in the body cannot be built; the metabolism will drop causing a rapid weight gain. Men should get rid of this fat belly by following a proper diet and exercising more.

Diet food: This sounds really weird, right? Unfortunately, it is true. Studies have shown that people who eat diet food gain more weight than people who do not. The reason for this is that when you want to buy a fat-free or a diet product remember that fat-free does not mean calorie-free. What people normally do is buy a fat-free biscuit and two minutes later the box is empty. When consuming a diet product, moderate your intake, taking in too many calories will only cause you weight gain.

Following very strict or weird diets (fad diets): Let your diet be balanced and varied, you cannot just cut down the

carbohydrates, protein or fat intake, because you decided that your body does not burn one of these.

Eat everything in moderation you need carbs for energy, proteins for building muscles and for tissue regeneration, fat for brain development. Do not starve yourself, you will lose weight. If you do that your hormones levels will drop and your metabolism will go down

Overtraining: Most of the beginners spend too much time in the gym. When these efforts fail to give the wanted results, they just double the training and stop burning fat. Overtraining syndrome (OVT) is characterized by feelings of fatigue and depression, it increases the cortisol levels (a hormone responsible for breaking down the muscle tissue), and will decrease testosterone level (so no more muscle building). If you continue exercising beyond your body capability you will get an increase of OVT, you will not build muscles and you will not lose weight.

Try to rest: There should be a maximum of five workouts performed a week.

Every 8 to 12 weeks, take a week off, it will help rejuvenate the body. While you need to workout to build muscles, do it gradually by increasing the weight and intensity every week and not everyday. Also, focus on each part of your body separately. You cannot train all the muscles in the whole body at one time. Example: 1 day for the legs, one day for the shoulder, one day for the ABS..

All of the improvements take place when you are resting after working.

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

RECIPE

Creamy Coconut Ladoos



Coconut ladoos are moist, creamy, sweet, and amazingly delicious and are very popular in every region of India. It is served during auspicious occasions, on small celebrations, or even just as a quick fix for a sweet craving. This delicacy is also naturally gluten-free and can be made vegan if desired.

Total time: 30 minutes

Serving: 15-16 ladoos

Ingredients:

- 2 cups desiccated coconut
- 1/4 cup additional coconut powder + 1 tsp rose petals for garnishing
- 1 cup milk powder
- 1 cup sugar powder
- 1/2 cup coconut cream
- 2 tbsp clarified butter (ghee)
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder

Instructions:

- Coat a heavy bottom saucepan with ghee and place on heat
- Once ghee is heated, add desiccated coconut and roast for 2 minutes, stirring it continuously.
- Add the milk powder, sugar powder and coconut cream and cook for around 4-5 minutes, or until the milk is absorbed by the coconut and the mixture becomes soft and begins to leave the sides of the pan
- Switch off the flame and transfer to a plate
- Once the mixture cools slightly, scoop a small portion onto your palm and form them into 12 to 15 round ladoos
- Gently roll the ladoos in dried desiccated coconut and rose petal mixture (optional) and place them on a plate to cool completely
- Let the ladoos rest for a couple of hours before serving, this will help them firm up.
- The ladoos can be stored in a refrigerator for up to a week in an airtight container.



Chef Chhaya Thakker



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



MMC launches fourth branch in Kuwait

Metro Medical Center (MMC), one of the largest and fastest growing hospital chains in Kuwait, launched its specialized medical center, 'Super Metro Specialized Medical Center', in Fahaheel on 24 February.

The new Center was inaugurated by top management of MMC, in the presence of ambassadors from several countries, as well as ministers and socio-cultural leaders. The inaugural event, themed 'Metro Day', featured various cultural performances representing different states of India, as well as those from other countries.

Opening of the new center, located in Building No.93, Block-10, Makka Street, Near Mangaf Signal, marks MMC's fourth branch in Kuwait, and heralds its entry to Fahaheel, after having cemented its presence in Farwaniya and Salmiya with three medical centers earlier.

As part of the launch of the new specialized medical center, a slew of special offers and discounts on various medical services are being extended by MMC for three months from the inauguration date.

These include: Free consultation by doctors; Discount of 40 percent on medical procedures; Discount of 10 percent on pharmacy invoices; Full body checkup for KD10, which comprises testing for fasting



blood sugar, lipid profile, creatinine, SGPT, Uric acid, Vitamin D, Complete blood count, ECG, Blood pressure, and doctor consultations.

The full-fledged Super Metro Specialized Medical Center, which will be providing 24/7 services, offers the following medical services and facilities to patients: Cardiology, Neurology, Urology, Endocrinology, Internal Medicine, Orthopedics, In-Vitro-Fertilization, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, General Medicine, Occupational Health, and Day-Care Surgeries.

The Center also offers Specialized Dental, Pediatric Dental, ENT, Eye Specialist, Opticals, Hearing Center, Derma & Cosmetology, Laser Procedures, MRI, CT & Dexa Scans, Digital

X-rays, Endoscopy, Colonoscopy, Radiology, 2D, 3D, and 4D Ultrasound, MoH-approved PCR tests, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Ambulance and Home Care services. In addition, the center accepts all insurance cards, and provides other conveniences such as a cafeteria, auditorium, and ample car parking facilities for visitors, besides being located in an area with easy access from all parts of Kuwait.

MMC is a healthcare chain managed by professionals with a mission and a passion for providing high-quality healthcare to patients, which has led to it becoming the top healthcare provider in Kuwait in a very short time. The Center also has a reputation for its humanitarian and selfless service, and

for providing compassionate healthcare to the less privileged in society. More than 75,000 needy patients have availed free medical services at MMC over the past eight years as a part of the Center's social commitments.

"Armed with the best of the facilities in areas of patient care, and with a highly qualified and dedicated team of physicians, nurses, technicians and other medical professionals, Metro Medical Center endeavors to match quality benchmarks for the benefit of all patients, now and in the future," said MMC Group Chairman and CEO Mustafa Hamza, while thanking citizens and residents in Kuwait for their continued support and patronage of MMC.

EPA to launch awareness campaign against single-use plastics

A workshop organized recently by the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), West Asia Office, aims to bring about behavioral changes in the public through an awareness campaign against single-use plastics (SUPs).

Speaking during the workshop, Acting Director-General of EPA, Samira Al-Kandari, revealed that only eight percent of the 314,000 tons of plastic waste generated annually in

the country is currently recycled. Most of the plastic waste ends up in landfills.

The planned campaign, which will target educational institutions, companies, and small business owners, is part of the overall national plan to encourage behavior change towards sustainable consumption and production practices.

As part of the government's environmental strategy for waste management, Kuwait is planning to ban the use of non-biodegradable



plastic bags in shopping centers and cooperative societies.

Participating in the workshop, the United Nations Environment Program Representative and the Regional Director for West Asia, Sami Dimassi, launched the 'Let's Spin and Change' campaign, in cooperation with EPA, to reduce single-use plastic waste. The campaign targets the public, particularly young people, and encourages them to switch to environmentally-friendly alternatives.



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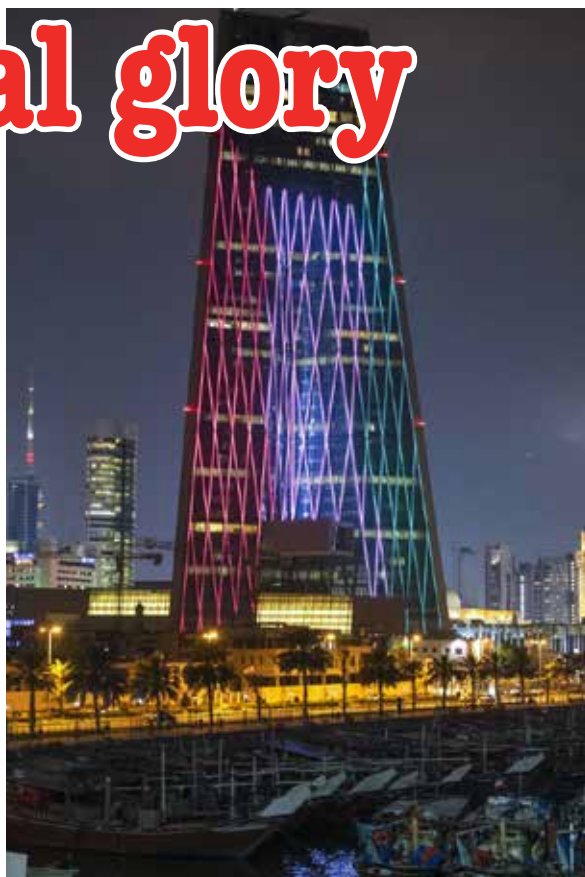


Since 1974






in national glory



Kuwaitis celebrated the National and Liberation days with great joy and festivities as every year. Marking the country's National and Liberation Days, Kuwaitis and residents enjoyed the great outdoors weather as well as the celebrations held all over Kuwait with fireworks, parades, music bands and water guns giving everyone a sense of fun and celebration.



LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Ahlan February' promotion



As part of Kuwait's National and Liberation Day celebrations, LuLu Hypermarket launched the Ahlan February promotion, which ran from 22 to 28 February. The event was inaugurated by Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, Mahmoud Abdul Samad Bu Shahary, at the LuLu Hypermarket Qurain outlet in the presence of the hypermarket's top management in Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

The week-long festival, which celebrates the national holidays, offered a series of amazing discounts on all item categories, along with 62 amazing offers to mark each year of Kuwait's independence. The event also included a free-

trolley offer, with 600 lucky winners walking away with their trolley purchases absolutely free for six days from 23 to 28 February. Visitors also took advantage of special promotions for fresh produce from Kuwait, deals of the day, factory clearance prices for garments and footwear, brand of the week promotions, and a digital shopping festival.

One of the main attractions of the promotion featured large cut-outs and images of iconic structures and buildings in Kuwait, as well as a special selfie counter for visitors to take pictures against the backdrop of these displays. The event also featured patriotic song performances by students from several Arabic schools in Kuwait.

A Kuwait art gallery exhibition, which was also held during the promotion period, saw the participation of more than 20 Arabic schools in Kuwait with students contesting in arts and craft competitions.

The first, second and third place winners of the competitions, from each of the three categories — drawing junior, drawing senior, and craft — were awarded prizes and special LuLu Merit Certificates. All participants in the competitions also received certificates and consolation prizes.

Adding to the excitement of the event were special musical performances by a Kuwaiti band and the traditional sword dances by a folk-art troupe. Additionally, an Arabic food festival was

also held on the sidelines of the promotion, and food sampling counters offered visitors a taste of traditional Kuwaiti food.

The event also featured a unique display of the Kuwait Water Towers monument, which was constructed using 14,000 plus Abraaj water bottles (330 ml). Three water tanks were set up, each more than four meters high, and the main sponsor of this display was Abraaj Water Co.

Also during the inauguration, LuLu Hypermarket's top management and the governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate welcomed and congratulated Captain Yousef Al-Shatti of Kuwait Navy on his breaking the Guinness world record for the fastest swim across Kuwait Bay in the male category.

Liberation 1991, a victory that resonates to this day

Invasion of Kuwait by the brutal Iraqi aggression on 2 August 1990 was a watershed moment in the country's history. It changed forever the trajectory of the nation and in the thinking and attitudes among citizens and residents in Kuwait. It brought about a reset in relations and considerations over who were friends and who were foes, and a dramatic recalibration in geopolitics of the region.

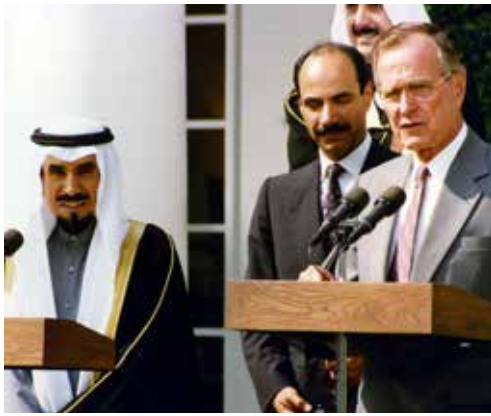
Bickering among segments of society, a hallmark of the country until then, were forgotten in the face of an unprecedented adversity, and the nation came together as one to thwart a common enemy. The solidarity and closing of ranks witnessed during this period gathered strength over the next seven months of occupation, with people supporting and lending support to each other in a unity unwitnessed until then.

While the vanquishing of Iraqi forces and liberation of the country on 26 February, 1991 brought an end to the dark days of occupation, the physical and mental scars left behind by those seven dreadful months continued to impact the lives and livelihoods of people long after the horrific event.

Through their valorous acts and deeds during this period, Kuwait and its people etched their history in golden letters that will remain indelible throughout time. The martyrs who paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives, so as to keep the flag of Kuwait flying free, live on forever in the hearts and minds of a grateful nation.

Following the invasion, the people of Kuwait called upon the international community to uphold the voice of truth and legitimacy, and to ensure that the aggression would not stand. Leveraging its exemplary relations and its excellent foreign policies over the years, Kuwait urged the United Nations to support efforts to restore the nation's sovereignty under the UN Charter.

The role of Kuwait's wise leadership and the efforts of its men, women and children, played historical and pivotal roles in consolidating the Kuwaiti right in international forums and carrying



The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with late US President George Bush senior and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Washington Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

Kuwait's message around the world. And, heeding this appeal, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 678 on 29 November 1990. The resolution gave Iraq until 15 January 1991 to withdraw from Kuwait, and empowered states to use all necessary means to force Iraq out of Kuwait after the deadline.

On the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of Kuwait's liberation, we take a look back to those days, weeks and months of efforts by Kuwait to restore its sovereignty.

The leadership of Kuwait and its efforts to reinstate the country's legitimacy were led by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, and the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and others whose input were recorded, each according to his position, in the return of Kuwait to its people.

With the first moments of the invasion, Kuwait raised its case in international and regional forums and mobilized global support for it in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and in the meeting of foreign ministers of non-aligned countries

that was held on the sidelines of the meeting of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 5 October 1990. Kuwait affirmed at the time that the Iraqi occupation represented a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

It urged members to condemn the aggression and continue their support for the principled positions taken by the international community, represented by commitment and full compliance with UNSC resolutions towards the Iraqi aggression and support Kuwait's efforts to achieve the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from its territory, the return of the legitimate government to the country and the demand of the aggressor to pay all compensation for what they caused to the economic and social environment in Kuwait in terms of destruction, losses, and the money that was looted.

Indeed, the UNSC held an emergency session, based on the request of several countries on 3 August, 1990, and Resolution 660 was issued condemning the Iraqi invasion, calling for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwaiti lands and the return of legitimacy to its people. The US and the Soviet Union announced in a statement their condemnation of the invasion and demanded that Iraq withdraw its forces immediately from Kuwait, while the 19th session of foreign ministers of Islamic countries, during its meeting in Cairo, also issued a statement calling for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory, as did the ambassadors of NAM who agreed during their meeting in New York on denouncing the invasion and demanding Iraq's immediate withdrawal.

The US also submitted a new draft resolution to the UNSC to impose comprehensive economic and military sanctions against Iraq to force it to withdraw from Kuwait without restrictions or conditions, in implementation of the UNSC resolution that it adopted hours after the invasion. The UNSC approved the draft resolution submitted by the US, after amending it, the UNSC issued Resolution 661 on 6 August, which was the second after the invasion, and affirmed the Council's determination to end the occupation of Kuwait and restore its sovereignty and safety.

The developments necessitated opening the door for peace-loving countries to send troops to the region. Following this, contacts took place between various world capitals to mobilize an international coalition, especially after the UNSC issued a third resolution number 662, in which the UN confirmed its rejection of Iraq's decision to annex Kuwait and considered it invalid, therefore the decision was annulled and demanded that all countries, international organizations and specialized agencies not recognize this annexation.

The vanguards of Arab and international forces also began to arrive in Saudi Arabia to form the international coalition to liberate Kuwait, while the UNSC issued its fourth resolution on the Iraqi



The late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah

invasion bearing the number 664 and reaffirmed the invalidity of Kuwait's annexation to Iraq. Soon after that, the UNSC issued Resolution 674 against Iraq, and the five major countries agreed on a draft resolution that would allow the use of military force against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait.

At the end of November 1990, the UNSC issued several resolutions in connection to Iraq, the first of which was Resolution 677, which warned Iraq of the consequences of its attempts to obliterate the identity of Kuwait and settle Iraqis in place of Kuwaiti citizens, and underlined the importance of keeping smuggled copies of the population register in Kuwait. The UNSC also issued Resolution 678, which authorized states to use all necessary means to ensure compliance with previous resolutions and gave Iraq until 15 January 1991 to withdraw its forces from Kuwait.

Following the issuance of UNSC Resolution 678, which stipulated the use of military force against Iraq, the pace of events accelerated, and at dawn on 17 January 1991, the coalition forces began their major attack on Iraqi military and strategic sites in Kuwait and Iraq, as a prelude to the liberation of Kuwait. This included an air attack on Iraqi military installations and bases, command and control centers, public facilities, bridges, water and electricity stations, as well as 60 military bases.

Following this, the countries of the international coalition began to prepare for their ground attack on the Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The late US President George Bush gave the green light to the commander of the coalition forces, the late General Norman Schwarzkopf, to launch the ground attack, with the decision taken moments before the deadline set by the allies and the UN to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

On 24 February 1991, the international coalition comprising forces from 30 nations began their ground attack on the Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Reinforced with the latest mechanisms, the coalition attacked and destroyed the Iraqi forces on Kuwaiti lands, and soon the Iraqi army collapsed under the weight of the combined strikes by the international forces. On 26 February 1991 Kuwait was returned to its people once again a free and independent nation.

A taste of Canada in Kuwait

The Embassy of Canada in Kuwait welcomed a group of eight companies as part of the Taste of Canada mission to Kuwait on February 15. The objective of the mission was to introduce high-quality Canadian beef for the first time to Kuwait, as well as a range of premium seafood from some of the best suppliers in addition to Canadian ingredients, spices and high-quality Canadian



organic products. The Embassy of Canada partnered with Prime Cuts and the Waldorf Astoria Hotel during an open day that saw a display of premium products at the Prime Cuts — Arabella location which included a group of the most skilled executive chefs, food manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors from the leading companies in Kuwait.

The day ended with an exclusive dinner featuring a special Canadian-inspired menu at Ava Restaurant at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Invitees included CEOs, industry leaders, restaurateurs

chefs, culinary experts as well as prominent food bloggers and influencers.

Canada's ambassador to Kuwait, Alia Mawani, said the "Taste of Canada" was an important platform for promoting Canadian food and agricultural products.

"It is a matter of pride to celebrate the introduction of Canadian beef in Kuwait for the first time, and I am delighted to see some of the largest Canadian suppliers here in Kuwait. Canada provides a variety of healthy products to satisfy the most sophisticated palates around the world," the ambassador said.

Abdullah Al Muzaini, CEO of Prime Cuts, said, "Prime Cuts is honored to partner with the Embassy of Canada in celebrating the special and first-of-its-kind 'Taste of Canada' event, which reflects the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Canada. We are excited to introduce new Canadian products to Kuwait."

"We are proud to host the 'Taste of Canada' event this year, in cooperation between the Embassy of Canada and the Waldorf Astoria Kuwait, which takes us on a tasting tour of the finest Canadian ingredients prepared by our international chefs," said Kemal Sertekirmezi, General Manager of Waldorf Astoria Kuwait.

Charlotte Campbell, Executive Director and Sales Director of Lobster Fishers in Prince Edward Island, said she is very happy to be in Kuwait to explore opportunities for cooperation in the Kuwaiti market, explaining that Kuwait and the Gulf countries are of utmost importance to their company. She appreciated the role of the embassy and the cooperation of its staff in organizing such a meeting pointing to the quality of Canadian products, which have international fame.

The trade mission included participants from the following Canadian companies: Spice Aver-Can-Mar, Floating Leaf Fine Foods, Gedney Fish, Lobster PEI, Made Good, Moncton Fish Market and Prairie Halal Foods.

The Taste of Canada expedition was sponsored by the Embassy of Canada in Kuwait, Agricultural & Agrifood Canada, Canada Beef, and the Ontario Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

LuLu Hypermarket dazzles visitors with Abraaj water bottle display

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region and the destination of choice for discerning shoppers, launched the 'LuLu Ahlan February' promotion to celebrate the upcoming Kuwait National and Liberation Days.

As part of these celebrations LuLu Hypermarket will be offering amazing discounts and exciting special offers across various brands and products for the entire month of February, as well as holding many fun activities for shoppers to participate in.

In line with the celebratory nature of the month-long promotion, an eye-catching spectacular display of Kuwait's iconic water tanks, made entirely of 14,000 small (330ml) Abraaj water bottles, has been erected at the AlQurain outlet of the hypermarket. The display, which has been attracting crowds of visitors daily and features three water towers each more than four meters high, is sponsored by Abraaj Water.



The 'LuLu Ahlan February' promotion reiterates LuLu Hypermarket's continued commitment to engage with the community in celebrating its festivals, and to provide shoppers with an unrivaled shopping experience, while offering high-quality products from around the world at exceedingly competitive prices.

Turkish ambassador praises Kuwait's humanitarian support



Turkish Ambassador H.E. Toby Nur Sonmez, held a press conference last week to express her gratitude to the Kuwaiti government and its people for their support following the earthquake that hit southern Turkey. She emphasized that the ties between the two nations have grown beyond political and economic relations to become fraternal, as evidenced by the aid and assistance provided by Kuwaiti authorities and citizens to those affected by the earthquake.

It was revealed that nine Kuwaiti military planes, each carrying around 100 tons of

relief material as well as rescue and shelter equipment, have flown to cities in Turkey since the devastating earthquakes. There are also around 400 tons of aid donated by the Kuwaiti people lying in the embassy's warehouses that are awaiting dispatch to Turkey. The ambassador commended the generosity of the Kuwaiti people and their cash donations and noted that contributions by charitable organizations were considerable. The ambassador also mentioned that some Kuwaitis who own property in Turkey offered their homes to those affected by the earthquake free of charge.

She added that the Turkish community in Kuwait was also cooperative and participated in organizing and mobilizing aid in Turkey. About 200 volunteers participated in these efforts. Regarding the reconstruction of the affected areas, the envoy stated that it would take approximately a year, but she said Turkey is a strong country that will emerge from this ordeal, and that the elections will be as scheduled. She also praised the international support that Turkey has received in the aftermath of the disaster.

The earthquakes that struck southeastern



Turkey on 6 February had a magnitude of 7.7 and 7.6, with a third strong earthquake (magnitude 6.4) hitting Hatay on 20 February with a total of 7,242 aftershocks. The earthquakes affected a vast area with a total population of 13.5 million, with 10 provinces experiencing earthquakes. The Turkish Ministry of Health reported that 42,310 citizens lost their lives, and 105,505 others were injured.

The Turkish government has mobilized all its emergency response capabilities, and ongoing rescue efforts in the affected areas have been complemented by international support. Currently, over 250,000 personnel are working in the field, including volunteers, with assistance provided by 102 countries, and 3,200 foreign search and rescue personnel from different nations are on the ground.

Enhancing education key to rejuvenating governance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They add that epistemic governance will also need to supplant the existing traditional style of governing where inept decisions are often made to appease groups or to meet partisan interests.

For far too long, people and their representatives in parliament have followed a pattern of decision making where, when any issue or policy comes up for deliberation, stances are taken based on narrow parochial- or self-interests without considering the pros and cons of the policy, or why it needs to be implemented, and without heeding its wider impact on the overall welfare of the country.

The traditional way of political or social discourse has been to begin a discussion with an end in mind, thereby wasting endless hours 'debating' an issue over which each side has already arrived at a conclusion. These ineffectual discussions lead to reactive, rather than proactive decisions, actions and results. From an individual and parochial point of view, this traditional approach in decision-making may have served well in the past. But this method has become increasingly untenable and unsustainable, as well as unsuited for a world moving ahead at a rapid pace.

Moreover, as some other policy specialists have pointed out, to ensure sustained success of any epistemic governing and governance model requires access to high quality knowledge, knowledge production and knowledge application processes. Put another way, progress towards an advanced form of knowledge society, knowledge economy, and knowledge democracy, necessitates having universities and higher education sectors that are capable of driving this development.

In Kuwait, notwithstanding the recent importance accorded to epistemic governance, the major prerequisite to supporting this governing model — having access to good, effective and sustainable quality education and learning — is an area that the country has struggled to make inroads into in the past, and continues to grapple with even today.

Despite various plans and exercises initiated over the past many decades to improve the quality of learning and teaching in Kuwait, outcomes have been less than that aspired for. The glaring gaps that exist in

Kuwait's education landscape was once again highlighted during a recent symposium held at the American International University in Kuwait. Addressing the gathering, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr. Khaled Mahdi indicated that educational shortcomings in Kuwait were increasingly being reflected in the skill-gaps evident in the local labor market.

He added that the learning gap in the country, which widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in a situation where the average gap is currently close to six years. To put this in perspective, the learning level of a graduate at the twelfth grade in Kuwait's schools is equivalent to that of a seventh-grade student. To address these gaps, Dr. Mahdi proposed the implementation of an education development strategy that includes better and more efficient governance in the educational sector, curriculum development, teacher licensing, and adherence to international standards.

Emphasizing the importance of monitoring implementation of the strategy so as to assess progress, bridge gaps and overcome challenges, the Secretary-General regretted that, although Kuwait's spending on education was equivalent to that of Finland, the return on investment has been far lower. Finland has consistently ranked among the top countries in international education assessments, while Kuwait has left much to be desired in these assessments.

On a related note, and of specific relevance to Kuwait, was a forum on 'Future Education' held on the sidelines of World Government Summit (WSG 2023). The forum, which focused on 'Prioritizing Learning and Work', addressed some of the key areas on the current state of global education, and the challenges and opportunities facing this field. In their discussions, academicians and education experts noted that in order to achieve and improve generational changes it was imperative for governments to prioritize learning and work.

Speakers at the forum pointed out that addressing the global priorities of education would require the strengthening of ties between the public and private sectors, engaging in partnerships with international governments and organizations. They also

recommended that governments need to establish new mindsets, work models, national development, and upskilling, so as to adapt to rapid changes underway within workforces and educational sectors.

In Kuwait, the hope is that the government under the incumbent prime minister will give improving education the priority that it sorely needs. This prioritization is crucial considering the essential role that education plays in generating and disseminating knowledge needed to support epistemic governance, but also to ensure Kuwait's future growth and prosperity.

In a positive sign, while continuing his address at the WGS 2023, Kuwait's premier indicated that the government would act proactively to meet and overcome the ongoing challenges whether in financial, educational, or in other fields, so as to meet the needs of the ongoing knowledge revolution and the digital transformation taking place worldwide.

Studies and papers published in the run-up to WGS 2023, as well as discussions held on the sidelines of the Summit, also underlined the significance of good governance and quality leadership to the development and growth of countries, and its role as critical components to achieving the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Academicians, activists and speakers from civil society organizations speaking on the sidelines of WGS 2023 also propounded on the twin aspects of good governance and quality leadership. They pointed out that the quality of a nation's leadership and the trust vested in them by the public are keys to promoting development and offering a better life to citizens of these states.

They noted that developing countries seeking to fast-track sustainable development, in particular, need visionary and effective leaders who promote good governance. These leaders should have motivation, commitment and courage of conviction, as well as the ability to be inclusive and build consensus. They will need to be flexible and not hidebound, willing to accept responsibility as well as accountability, to be honest and to rigorously promote probity and integrity in public life. They should not only have a clear and attainable vision of what is sought to be achieved, but also the ability to put the national interest above self.

Policy specialists also opined that effective and ethical governance and government can and should benefit from many influences and inputs, but these influences and inputs should be in the form of evidence, information, knowledge and informed public participation, so as to contribute to the quality and legitimacy of government analysis and action.

They clarified that effective knowledge-based decision-making will need to meet four essential criteria: It should be based on a philosophy of open communication between leadership and membership; genuine dialogue before deliberation and decisions; common access to all information for all involved in making a decision; And, it should exist in a culture of trust between leaders and people.

On the other hand, some experts pointed out that since there was no universally accepted definition of good governance, nor any globally agreed mechanism that assessed a country's governance, it was difficult to label a country's governance as 'good' or 'bad'.

They explained that governance is a broad concept covering various aspects of governing, including its economic, social and political policies, institutional processes, regulatory framework, and adherence to rule of law. Picking or focusing on just one aspect or another to determine good or bad governance would not be fair nor provide the right perspective.

One of the most cited definitions and clarification of good governance probably comes from the United Nations itself.

According to the world body, a government that practices good governance has eight characteristics: It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, and receptive to the needs of people. It is also effective and efficient in its functioning, equitable and inclusive in its dealings and follows the rule of law.

Good governance also entails assuring that corruption is minimized, that the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. Here is hoping that Kuwait wakes up to the reality of where the country is headed to, and will set a course correction that ensures its future prosperity.

Ten Ways to Improve Your Concentration

By Hermoine Macura-Noble



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, here.



In today's digital world, the constant flow of information means that staying focused can be a struggle. Human resource experts complain that this new digital matrix has reduced the attention span of people, and more staff are coming into the corporate world suffering from attention deficiency. "They find it hard to be off their phones..."

It's usually one of the social apps like Instagram or Tik Tok. Most people start first thing in the morning and continue throughout the day checking for messages, emails, or current events on the social channels," explains HR consultant and Learning and Development Advisor, Amrita Singh.



But the good news is that concentration is much like a mental muscle, the more you exercise it, the stronger it will get. Here are the top ten ways to improve your concentration and develop razor-sharp focus.

Eliminate distractions: "Phones are kept near beds and are checked the last thing before going to sleep and during the night, affecting concentration levels. As a result, it is challenging to engage many people in deep conversations that need time, focus, and attention, like problem-solving or creative thinking, adds Singh. According to research,

just seeing our smartphone impairs our ability to concentrate. Block out as much distraction as possible. Close your social media and other apps, silence notifications, and put your phone on mute to avoid being distracted by incoming calls or texts.

Practice mindfulness and meditation: Mindfulness and meditation can help you increase your attention span by focusing on the present moment. Even just 20 minutes of meditation will help you improve your concentration.

Get a good night's sleep: Getting a good night's sleep can significantly impact your ability to concentrate. Experts recommend getting seven to eight hours of sleep every night. Turning off the television and putting your phone away an hour before bed and winding down instead with some relaxing music, a warm bath, or a book is the ideal way to go.

Vary your diet: The foods you eat can affect your cognitive functions like concentration. To boost your concentration, avoid processed foods and sugar-loaded or greasy foods. Instead, try eating more fatty fish like salmon and trout, eggs, blueberries, walnuts, avocados, and spinach, which have all been shown to support brain health. Studies have also found that eating breakfast can improve your concentration.

Take regular breaks: Research has found that even taking very short breaks by shifting your attention elsewhere can dramatically enhance your ability to focus.

Take a few moments to break, with a subtle reminder to get up, stretch your legs, and get a dose of social media or news every 90 minutes.

Work Smarter, Not Harder: Blocking off time for specific tasks can help you focus on one thing at a time and lower the risk of distractions. Setting a time limit can help you focus on the job because you know the limited time you can spend on it.

"You may want to consider applications like MS Teams and Zoom for meetings, training, and presentations with hundreds of people simultaneously maximizing time and resources. Conversations limited to one-to-one, or one to a few, can now happen as easily as one-to-many. Digitalizing processes allows people to be freed up to focus on higher-level thinking tasks. Storage of information using the cloud

allows companies to store copious amounts of information to make work easier for their staff," says Singh.

Connect with nature: Boost your concentration naturally by getting outside every day, even for a short while. Spending time in nature benefits your mental wellbeing. Studies have shown that people's mental energy bounced back just by looking at pictures of nature.

Train your brain: Playing certain types of brain games can help to improve your concentration. According to research, people who often do crosswords, sudoku, or jigsaws have better brain function later in life.

Multitasking is a myth: Scientific studies have shown that the human brain cannot focus on two things simultaneously. Juggling more than one task at a time dramatically reduces your productivity. So try focusing on one study at a time to get the best results. "A company is only as strong as its weakest employee, and its growth and success are linked with its employees. With stress levels and absenteeism rising, experts say that for companies to thrive in 2023, HR needs to take employee wellbeing more seriously. Companies must decide on the importance of their staff wellbeing, so stress levels that affect work are kept low... Ergonomic furniture and policies not to disturb people outside working hours are also important to staff wellbeing," says Singh.

Make time for exercise: Regular exercise is a great way to improve concentration and physical health. Studies have shown that people with an active lifestyle perform better on tasks requiring a high concentration level. Even just 20-30 minutes a day can make a big difference in your ability to focus. Going for a brisk walk or doing a stretch class can give you a new sense of focus.





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A Trip to GIBRALTAR

A British Overseas Territory



correspondence on obtaining a visa for the British Overseas Territories, I was finally able to obtain one. I then set off on my trip to the 'Rock' in late April of 2022, starting from Spain. And, because I do not like to join tourist groups and buses, I decided to enter Gibraltar on foot from Spain.

It was the strangest travel experience for me. A border fence and a customs zone separate the Spanish territory from the British sovereign territory of Gibraltar. I drove my car to the Spanish customs area, parked it there, and with my small bag headed on foot to the Passports and Customs section where I got my passport stamped with an exit from Spain.



and many legends link Hercules, the legendary figure in Greek mythology, to this area.

There are many amazing labyrinthine caves in the 'Rock' that have been converted into a tourist attraction, as well as a Catholic church built in the fifteenth century and an artillery battery and underground tunnels built during the Second World War. No visit to Gibraltar would be complete without visiting the Nature Reserve that extends up the mountain and interacting with the Gibraltar macaques there.

An old legend claims that the British presence in the strait will end once the last macaque there is extinct. So, the British soldiers stationed there make it a point to pamper these mammals, feeding and protecting them. However, visitors should not feed the monkeys as there is a heavy fine of 5,000 pounds sterling attached to any such attempt.

The St Michael's Cave in Gibraltar, which dates back to the Stone Age and to legends that link it to the gates of the underworld, today hosts concerts, ballets and other cultural events in the Great Hall. There is a special show of music and lights that takes place in the cave several times a day, but prior reservation is required.

There are steps carved into the mountain rock through which you can explore the plant and animal life up close while enjoying the stunning surrounding scenery, but climbing these stairs requires a relatively reasonable level of physical fitness and is not suitable for those with a fear of heights.

A relatively new attraction that was only fully completed in 2018, is the Skywalk, which is indeed one of the top things to do when visiting Gibraltar Nature Reserve. Perched 340 meters above the Mediterranean Sea, the Skywalk is an incredible experience, that is, unless you are afraid of heights. If you can overcome your fear of heights you will be able to enjoy uninterrupted views in all directions.

One of the biggest fun activities on a trip to Gibraltar would be to join the exciting dolphin watching trip. These highly rated tours are undoubtedly one of the top things to do in Gibraltar for families, and are suitable for children of all ages. These marine wildlife adventures last approximately 75 minutes and include a thrilling ride on a specially designed viewing ship that sails alongside up to 200 dolphins.

One night during my stay in Gibraltar, a loud sound shook all parts of the room, so I went to the balcony to see where it came from and witnessed the landing of one of the planes in the public street opposite my room. I witnessed the scene of cars and people stopping every day from the balcony of my room while the plane landed in the strangest and most dangerous airport in the world.

In my Instagram @nourajtraveller you can find a special highlight for all the places I visited in Gibraltar that can help you plan your trip. And, do not forget to take with you British pounds for exchange, the euro currency is not accepted in Gibraltar.

Noura Khan, a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and has visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 54K followers and her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.



By Nourah Khan
Exclusive to
The Times Kuwait

Gibraltar was always one of those destinations that piqued my curiosity and my desire to visit, due to its great history, its strategic location, and its special status, as it is considered a British sovereign land that intrudes into Europe and is claimed by Spain. Yes, Gibraltar is yet another relic from the days of the British Empire and one of the 14 overseas territories still part of Great Britain

What always aroused my curiosity and made me want to visit this place is that it is outside the interests and map of most Gulf tourists, who tend to flock to well-trodden tourist

destinations such as Switzerland, London and Germany. And if you asked anyone around you about what they know about Gibraltar, they would probably answer that it is a sea strait located between Morocco and Spain, and that it is currently a British colony.

But very few people know the history of this rocky mountain rising up from the Mediterranean Sea, a marvel of nature where the British remain juxtaposed today between an Arab-Islamic past and its current Spanish influences. Not many in our region also know that this tiny strip of land at the southern tip of Europe is a place of tourism par excellence, with several beautiful places that are ripe for adventure.

Gibraltar, a headland on the Spanish coast surrounded on three sides by the sea and an hour's drive from Spain's upmarket tourist attraction of Marbella, is home to over 35,000 people who are largely British but prefer to call themselves Gibraltarians.

Being a frequent visitor to Spain, specifically Malaga, I used to see a lot of tourist companies organizing trips for foreigners and transporting them from Marbella and Malaga to Gibraltar. But when I tried one summer to register with one of them, I did not succeed, because the company informed me that I held a Schengen visa, and that entering Gibraltar required a special visa called the Overseas Territories Visa or a British visa.

Even though as a Kuwaiti citizen I could obtain a British visa online, they informed me that entering Gibraltar would need a visa stamped on my passport from the British Embassy in Kuwait.

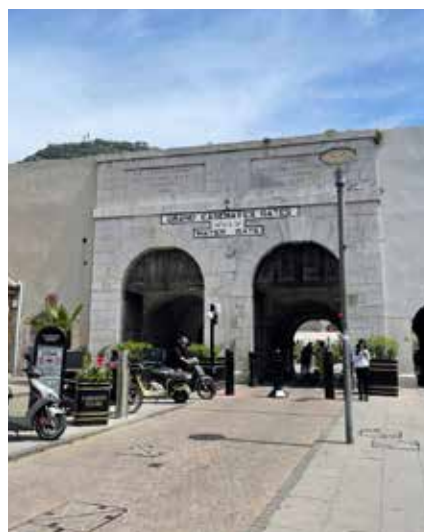
On returning to Kuwait and following a lot of research and

I then moved to another area in the building where a banner with the flag of Spain and a picture of a man walking indicated the way to Spanish territory of Gibraltar. Walking ahead I then saw the flag of Britain and the flag of Gibraltar along with the iconic red British telephone box indicating the British identity of the place. I thus entered on foot from Spanish territory that then changed to one of the British Overseas Territories.

As I continued walking down the main street, suddenly I saw the police putting up barriers in the middle of the road to stop traffic flow and all pedestrians gathered behind the barriers. I was ignorant of what was happening, but after a few moments I understood that a plane was about to land. Planes that come to Gibraltar apparently use the highway as the landing strip. Can you imagine that? There is no real airport, and the street is the makeshift airstrip!

I completed my way on foot, until I reached the hotel that I had booked into, and to complete the strangeness of the start of my trip, my five-star luxury hotel was a refurbished luxury cruise-liner. This was the first time that I experienced living in a giant ship that has been converted into a five-star hotel. The experience of staying on this luxurious cruise liner was that besides the opulent restaurants, spa and other trimmings, it provided a wonderful view of the most important landmark in Gibraltar, the eponymous 'Rock of Gibraltar'.

Not surprisingly, it was the first place I decided to visit. I used the cable car to go on the top from where you can have, on a clear day, panoramic views of Spanish coastal cities in Europe on one side, and, across the Mediterranean Sea, stunning views of the Moroccan mountains and the continent of Africa. Incidentally, the ancient Greeks thought Gibraltar was the end of the world



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Another year of war ahead



Richard Haass

President of the Council on Foreign Relations, is the author, most recently, of *The Bill of Obligations: The Ten Habits of Good Citizens*.

In the year since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the war has evolved in ways few predicted. The conventional wisdom was that Russian forces would quickly overwhelm the overmatched Ukrainians and take possession of much more of the country than they gained in 2014. Others went further, predicting that Russia would topple the government in Kyiv and replace it with a puppet regime that would ratify Russian control and no longer embody a Western-looking alternative to the bleakness that has become Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Given such dire forecasts, many in the West and in Ukraine would have readily accepted a version of what exists today, namely, a sovereign Ukraine exercising authority over some 80 percent of its territory. That this is the reality is a tribute to the effectiveness of Ukraine's military, the collective courage of the Ukrainian people and their leaders, and the steadfastness of US and European support in the form of arms, money, training, intelligence, and the acceptance of millions of refugees. It is also a stunning indictment of Russia's military.

Putin is faced with difficult choices as he contemplates a war of choice that has not gone as planned. His decision to invade was not irrational, given his assumptions that Ukraine would be no match for his military, that Europe (especially Germany) was too dependent on Russian gas to stand up to him, and that the United States, post-January 6 and post-Afghanistan, was too divided and inward-looking to aid Ukraine's defense. But, because all these assumptions proved wrong, Putin's calculation that the benefits of invading would dwarf the costs became a formula for disaster.

Putin now finds himself playing for time. Unable to defeat Ukraine's military, he is attacking economic and civilian targets, hoping to break the will of Ukrainians. He may also believe that, despite what Western leaders say, it is only a matter of time before European governments, along with the US, rethink the costs of supporting Ukraine.

So, what does this augur for the future? Wars end one of two ways: when one side



defeats the other and is able to impose its peace terms, or when the two sides conclude that compromise is preferable to continuing a war neither is strong enough to win.

Neither of these conditions applies to this war as of now. To be sure, it is far from clear that Ukraine can eject Russia from its territory, even if Western governments shed their inhibitions and supply Ukraine with more advanced arms. Russian

And yet the outlook for compromise is bleak. Putin appears determined to stay the course lest perceived defeat in Ukraine spur efforts by domestic rivals to remove him from power. Sanctions have had only a limited effect, as India, China, and others continue to purchase Russian energy. And Putin controls the political narrative at home, persuading many that Russia is a victim, forced by the US and NATO into a fight for survival against the West as a whole.

civilians, has led to calls for reparations and war-crimes tribunals. Some would add to this list the removal of Putin and his inner circle from power, an outcome seen by many as essential if Ukraine is ever to have confidence in any peace settlement.

In short, the conditions are far from ripe for diplomacy. One day this will change, but that day appears to be far off. The good news (if there is any) is that the war may well become less intense as both sides face the difficulty of sustaining the magnitude of losses they have suffered this past year. They simply lack the manpower, equipment, and economic resources to do so.

It also seems unlikely that Russia will opt to escalate. Attacking NATO makes no sense when it is patently clear Russia cannot even defeat Ukraine. Nuclear weapons seem to have little or no military value, and both China and India have made clear their opposition to their use. More important, Russia's use of nuclear weapons of any type would almost certainly bring US and NATO troops directly into the war.

The bad news, though, is that the war will not end anytime soon. The map of Ukraine a year from now will most likely resemble nothing so much as the map as it appears today. The year ahead promises to be dismal, not decisive — more reminiscent of World War I than of World War II.

It all adds up to a significant and sobering anniversary. A war that few expected to last so long could well spur another round of commemoration and analysis a year from now.

“ Wars end one of two ways: when one side defeats the other and is able to impose its peace terms, or when the two sides conclude that compromise is preferable to continuing a war neither is strong enough to win. ”

forces are dug in and will be difficult to dislodge. And there is the possibility, or even likelihood, that China would provide copious economic and military assistance to Russia, rather than see its strategic partner defeated by a US-led coalition.

And Russian forces, for their part, are simply too poorly trained and led to defeat Ukraine on the battlefield. Aerial attacks on civilian areas, however brutal and costly, are no substitute for battlefield success, and so far have merely stiffened the resolve of the Ukrainian people.

Ukraine, too, is disinclined to compromise. Nearly all Ukrainians are calling for the complete liberation of their country's territory. The reason is straightforward: the war has changed minds. Ukraine's military prowess, and the manifest shortcomings of the Russian military, have nurtured more than a little strategic optimism about what the future might hold.

Moreover, the war has hardened hearts. Russian atrocities, including bombing apartment buildings and executing

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Standing for Freedom



Joseph E. Stiglitz

A Nobel laureate in economics, is University Professor at Columbia University and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

The Republican Party has long wrapped itself in the American flag, claiming to be the defender of 'freedom'. The GOP believes individuals should be free to carry firearms, spew hate speech, and eschew vaccines and face masks. The same goes for corporations: Even if their activities destroy the planet and permanently change the climate, the 'free market' should be trusted to sort things out. Banks and other financial institutions should be 'liberated' from regulation, even if their activities can bring down the entire economy.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, the pandemic, and the acceleration of the climate crisis, it should be obvious that this conception of freedom is far too crude and simplistic for the modern world. Those who still espouse it are either mind-numbingly blinkered or on the take. As the great twentieth-century philosopher Isaiah Berlin put it: "Freedom for the wolves has often meant death to the sheep." Or, put another way, freedom for some is unfreedom for others.

In the United States, the freedom to carry guns has come at the expense of the freedom to go to school or the store without being shot. Thousands of innocent people – many of them children – have died so that this particular freedom can live. And millions have lost what Franklin Delano Roosevelt thought was so important, the freedom from fear.

There is no such thing as absolute freedom

within a society. Different freedoms must be balanced against each other, and any reasoned discussion among typical Americans (meaning one not captured by political activists and special interests) would inevitably conclude that the right to an AR-15 is not more 'sacred' than others' right to live.

In complex modern societies, there are innumerable ways that one's actions can harm others without one having to bear any consequences for it. Social-media platforms constantly pollute our 'information ecosystem' with disinformation and content that is well-known to cause harm (not least to adolescent girls). While the platforms present themselves

freedom concerns the range of things one can do. The greater one's 'opportunity set', the freer one is to act. Someone on the verge of starvation, doing what she must just to survive, effectively has no freedom. Viewed this way, an important dimension of freedom is the ability to realize one's potential. A society in which large segments of the population lack such opportunities — as is the case in societies with high levels of poverty and inequality — is not really free.

Investments in public goods (such as education, infrastructure, and basic research) can expand the opportunity set for all individuals, effectively enhancing the freedom

economists have long ignored these points and focused instead on 'freeing' the economy of what they view as pesky regulations and taxes on corporations (many of which have benefitted massively from public expenditures). But where would American business be without an educated labor force, the rule of law to enforce contracts, or the roads and ports needed to transport goods?

In their new book, *The Big Myth*, Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway show how business interests managed to sell the American public on the staunchly anti-government, "free market" vision of capitalism that emerged in the decades after World War II. The rhetoric of 'freedom' was key. The captains of industry and their academic servants systematically re-characterized our complex economy — a rich matrix of private, public, cooperative, voluntary, and not-for-profit enterprises — as simply a 'free enterprise' economy.

In books like Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* and Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, capitalism was crudely equated with freedom. Central to this vision of capitalism is the freedom to exploit: Monopolies should have unfettered power to trample potential entrants and squeeze their workers, and firms should be free to collude to exploit their customers. Yet only in a fairy tale world (or an Ayn Rand novel) would such a society and economy be called 'free'. Whatever we call it, it is not an economy that we should want; it is not one that promotes broadly shared prosperity; and the greedy, materialistic individuals that it rewards are not who we should want to be.

Yes, we desperately need free markets, but that means, above all, markets that are free from the stranglehold of monopoly and monopsony, and from the undue power that big businesses have amassed through ideological myth-making.

“

Someone on the verge of starvation, effectively has no freedom. In this aspect an important dimension of freedom is the ability to realize one's potential. A society where large segments of the population lack such opportunities is not really free.

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as neutral conduits of information that is already out there, their algorithms are actively promoting a socially harmful substance. But, far from paying any costs, the platforms are reaping billions of dollars in profits every year.

The US tech giants are shielded from liability by a 1990s-era law that was originally designed to foster innovation in the inchoate digital economy. The US Supreme Court is now considering a case involving this legislation, and other countries around the world are also questioning whether online platforms should be able to avoid accountability for their actions.

For economists, a natural measure of

of all. But such investments require taxes, and many individuals, especially in a society that valorizes greed, would rather free ride, by avoiding paying their fair share.

This is a classic collective-action problem. Only through coercion, forcing everyone to pay their taxes, can we generate the revenue needed to invest in public goods. Fortunately, all individuals, including those who have been forced against their will to contribute to society's investments, may be better off as a result. They will live in a society where they, their children, and everyone else has a larger opportunity set. In such circumstances, coercion is a source of liberation. Neoliberal



Prediabetes, a silent epidemic



Dr. Jibin John Thomas
Registrar-Internal Medicine
International Clinic-Farwaniya

Prediabetes is a growing health problem affecting millions of people around the world. It is a condition that occurs when a person's blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes is often referred to as a 'silent epidemic' because it often goes undetected and can lead to serious health consequences if left untreated.

There are several risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing prediabetes, including:

- **Obesity:** Excess weight, especially around the waist, can increase the risk of prediabetes.
- **Inactivity:** A sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk of prediabetes.
- **Age:** The risk of prediabetes increases with age, especially after the age of 45.
- **Family history:** If you have a family history of type 2 diabetes, your risk of prediabetes is increased.

- **Ethnicity:** African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans are at a higher risk of prediabetes.
- **High blood pressure:** Hypertension can increase the risk of prediabetes.
- **High cholesterol levels:** High levels of bad cholesterol (LDL) can increase the risk of prediabetes.

In many cases, people with prediabetes have no noticeable symptoms. However, some people may experience symptoms such as increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision, or slow-healing cuts and bruises.

Prediabetes is typically diagnosed through a blood test called the HBA1C test. This test measures the average blood sugar level over the past 2-3 months. A person is considered to have prediabetes if their HBA1C test result is between 5.7–6.4 percent.

Additionally, the HOMA-IR (Homeostatic Model Assessment of Insulin Resistance) test is used to measure insulin resistance in the body. It is calculated from the results of a fasting blood glucose test and a fasting insulin test. The HOMA-IR test provides an estimate of the level of insulin resistance in the body and can help diagnose conditions such as prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.

Insulin resistance occurs when the body's cells do not respond adequately to insulin, leading to high levels of glucose in the blood. The HOMA-IR

test is based on the idea that insulin resistance and β -cell function are two sides of the same coin, and therefore the two can be estimated from a single mathematical model.

A high HOMA-IR score indicates a high level of insulin resistance, which is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes and other health problems. A HOMA-IR score of 2.5 or higher is considered to be high, while a score of 2.0 or lower is considered to be within the normal range.

It is important to note that the HOMA-IR test is not a diagnostic test, but rather a tool to assess insulin resistance. Other tests, such as oral glucose tolerance tests and continuous glucose monitoring, may also be used to diagnose and monitor insulin resistance and diabetes. It is also important to work with a healthcare provider to interpret the results of the HOMA-IR test and to determine the best course of action for managing insulin resistance and related health conditions.

The good news is that prediabetes can often be reversed through lifestyle changes. The following measures can help prevent the progression of prediabetes to type 2 diabetes:

- **Healthy weight:** Losing 5–7 percent of your body weight can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- **Exercise:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of



physical activity most days of the week.

- **Healthy diet:** Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in your diet. Avoid processed foods, sugary drinks, and saturated fat.
- **Stop smoking:** Smoking can increase the risk of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.
- **Limit alcohol consumption:** Excessive alcohol consumption can increase the risk of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.

In conclusion, prediabetes is a growing health problem that requires attention. By making lifestyle changes and working with your healthcare provider, you can prevent the progression of prediabetes to type 2 diabetes and reduce your risk of developing other health problems. Do not ignore the warning signs and take action today to protect your health.

Dangers of OTC cough medications

Coughs and colds, sneezes and sniffles, and a bout of seasonal influenza have become integral to winter months. In a bid to seek some relief to their discomfort many people reach for readily available over-the-counter (OTC) medications.

However, health experts now caution that certain OTC cough medications have been found to cause adverse reactions in some people, especially among those with high blood pressure. They suggest that, before reaching for the nearest available OTC medication, people with high blood pressure should talk to their doctor or pharmacist about what cough medications are safe to take while also ensuring their blood pressure (BP) remains regulated.



The warning followed several cases where patients with high blood pressure seeking relief from coughs reached for OTC medications that then caused their BP to shoot up. Even medications labeled 'safe for people with high blood pressure' should be perused with caution, as drug marketers may label their product safe based on the exclusion of just one ingredient known to raise blood pressure.

Many people are not aware that most OTC medications and supplements for coughs and colds are a combination of multiple ingredients, one or more of which could be harmful to people with high blood pressure. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States defines combination products as therapeutic and diagnostic products that combine drugs, devices, and/or biological products.

Combination products are appealing because they provide the convenience of taking fewer pills and reduce the chance of not

remembering to take medications.

But because these OTC products are so widely accessible, people tend to underestimate their effects.

Knowing the science behind how OTC medications for cold and flu symptoms work can help people understand how they can be dangerous. For instance, the main active ingredients in most OTC cough and cold medicines are cough suppressants, painkillers, antihistamines, expectorants, and decongestants.

Doctors warn that if you have high blood pressure, decongestant is the one you should be careful about. Decongestants provide symptomatic relief from congestion because they cause constriction or narrowing of blood vessels in the nasal passages and sinuses, and by doing so, they reduce inflammation and swelling of the nose tissue.

While this provides effective relief from congestion and helps a stuffy nose feel better, the constricting effect on blood vessels also affects other blood vessels throughout the body. This narrowing of blood vessels in other parts of the body could lead to episodes of high blood pressure and even elevated heart rate in someone who has a history of heart disease, or in people who have hypertension it could cause a worsening of their blood pressure.

Moreover, because the decongestants work effectively and provide immediate relief, people tend to rely on these medications for several days. They also keep taking it every six to eight hours as recommended on the boxes or bottles of these drugs. But the constant administration of these medications can cause a compound effect.

The ingredients pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine that are commonly found in many decongestants and OTC flu remedies should be avoided by people with high BP. These ingredients are often found in OTC medications that go under the label of Mucinex-D, Advil-D, and Sudafed Cold and Cough.

Some of the symptoms that may indicate a negative reaction to OTC medications include: Heart palpitations due to an elevated heart rate; Headaches, dizziness, and blurry vision caused

by elevated blood pressure; Angina or chest discomfort, shortness of breath, or congestive heart failure, if you have underlying heart disease, such as a heart attack or blockage in coronary blood vessels.

Additionally, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen and naproxen sodium, which are often taken with cold and flu symptoms can cause sodium retention, which can create fluid retention that leads to swelling throughout the body, as well as exacerbation of shortness of breath in people with congestive heart failure.

Some of the cold and flu medications that

can be taken safely by people with high blood pressure or with underlying heart disease or hypertension are antihistamines and natural remedies, such as saline nasal rinses, staying hydrated, and getting rest. When it comes to OTC medication, doctors also suggest Coricidin HBP because it does not contain a decongestant.

However, before taking any medication or natural remedy people with elevated BP and other heart conditions should talk with your doctor. If a doctor is not available, then at the least they should check with a pharmacist who can help to choose a cough and cold product that is safe for people with heart conditions.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

High Time for a High-Seas Treaty



Jennifer Morris
CEO of The Nature Conservancy.

Our planet's tightly woven, interconnected natural systems are vital to life and livelihoods. Yet with each passing season, we are witnessing the crushing realities of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. In its 2023 Global Risks Report, the World Economic Forum warns that six of the top ten risks in the coming decade will stem directly from the loss and degradation of nature. In the face of extreme storms and floods, devastating droughts and wildfires, ocean dead zones, and food scarcity, demands for systemic change have reached a crescendo. Unless we embark on a new course, our crises will only deepen.

Despite the challenge of reaching global agreements in such a fractured world, we have cause for optimism. In late 2022, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) achieved a breakthrough after languishing in relative obscurity for many years. At the COP15 summit in Montreal in December, countries completed four years of negotiations and approved the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the most significant intergovernmental agreement on biodiversity in over a decade.

Under the GBF, governments have committed to protect 30 percent of the world's land, freshwater, and ocean by 2030; improve the sustainability of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry; and restore 30 percent of degraded ecosystems. The framework



establishes multiple pathways for scaling up solutions within and across borders. It includes down payments, financial commitments, and an implementation plan, and it is already spurring action by corporations, governments, and civil society.

But critical work remains to be done. On February 20, UN member states gathered in New York to finalize a key piece of the ocean-governance puzzle: a new treaty to conserve and sustainably manage marine biodiversity in the high seas.

The high seas cover two-thirds of all ocean and almost half the planet, and are home to up to ten million species — many of them still unidentified. But much of this biodiversity remains out of sight and thus out of mind. As a result, life in this vast expanse is constantly threatened by weak regulation of activities such as shipping and fishing, and by poor enforcement of existing laws.

The high seas belong both to everyone and to no one. As with many common resources, there is no comprehensive, agreed-upon framework governing conservation and the sustainable use of the ocean outside of national jurisdictions. But

since the same large petrels, leatherback turtles, sharks, and whales that we seek to protect on and off our shores spend much of their lives in the high seas, there is an obvious need for more robust global strategies to protect, manage, and monitor these areas.

Marine life does not recognize legal jurisdictions. For the conservation of migratory species and transboundary ecosystems to be effective, we urgently need a global high-seas treaty, which in turn will contribute to the implementation of the CBD's ambitious new framework. Without it, the CBD will have much less chance of success.

That is because, currently, there are no global powers to establish marine protected areas in the high seas. Even though the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea obligates states to assess the impact of activities in their waters, there is no global mechanism for assessing activities in the high seas. Instead, there is a patchwork of assessment mechanisms for different bodies that regulate parts of the high seas, but no minimum standards that ensure quality or consistency.

So, what needs to happen at the summit in

New York? For a new high-seas treaty to make a difference, it must achieve multiple objectives. The first is to provide countries with the legal powers to establish and manage a representative network of marine protected areas in the high seas, as this is essential to protecting at least 30 percent of the ocean by 2030.

Moreover, we must dramatically strengthen governance of human activities that affect the high seas, by establishing robust, modern environmental assessment and management standards. And we need to ensure sufficient financial, scientific, and technical support for states that require it.

We will also need a mechanism for sharing the benefits of marine genetic resources fairly and equitably, as well as a voting procedure when all good-faith efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted. Otherwise, one or two countries will be able to block progress even on issues that are supported by the overwhelming majority.

Only through a strong high-seas treaty and bolder action within existing treaty bodies (especially fisheries-management agreements) can we protect the health of the ocean. We must adapt quickly to new activities like deep-sea mining, as well as to increased shipping collisions with large animals and rising waste, noise, and artificial-light pollution. This requires managing the whole ocean in a more comprehensive fashion. With ocean health declining, maintaining the status quo is not a viable option.

The negotiations for the first international ocean treaty in over 40 years, and the first to target the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in the high seas, offer another opportunity to rebalance our relationship with nature. Building on the momentum from COP15 in Montreal, we must now set a course to address the biggest risks facing our planet in the next decade.

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