



DIPLOMAT

Humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society

3

4



LOCAL

Survey reveals growth in region to slow in 2023

11

TRAVEL

Bali: A paradise on Earth



Waste today burdens future generations



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Mother Earth Day on 22 April went largely unheralded in the midst of the Eid-al-Fitr holidays and related feasts, festivities, and an inordinate amount of food wastage that ran counter to the theme of this year's Earth Day, to 'Invest in our Planet'. The humongous amount of food that ends up in trash bins during this period is not only indicative of wanton wastage, but is also unfortunate, in particular when one considers that Eid-al-Fitr is a time when we are enjoined to think of those less fortunate, and to recognize our responsibility to the collective welfare of humanity.

Household waste generated during festive celebrations in Kuwait comprises largely of discarded food items along with plastic bags



and bottles, paper and styrofoam packings, soda cans and glass bottles. According to a report by Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA), in 2018, the country generated

around 1.6 kg of municipal solid waste per person per day. This waste is far higher than the global average daily waste of 0.74 kg per capita, and also higher relative to the average

per capita waste of 1.5 kg among other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

According to estimates by researchers at EPA, Kuwait generated between 37 to 43 million tons of waste in 2018. To get a better picture of the enormity of this waste, consider that the total carrying capacity of Kuwait's Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) tanker, Al Derwaza, is around 357,000 tons. It would take more than 110 such tankers to ferry all the waste that Kuwait generated in just 2018.

Most of the waste generated in Kuwait ends up in one of several unengineered landfills that dot the country. Surprisingly, for a small country with a total land area of less than 18,000 square kilometers (km²) Kuwait has a surfeit of landfills — 19 to be exact. Thankfully, over the years, 11 of these landfills have been closed, but sadly, not fully rehabilitated, as these landfills

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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Kuwait ranks fifth in regional food security

According to a recent analysis by GlobalData, the UK-based data analytics and consulting company, Kuwait came in fifth spot in terms of food security in a ranking of the 56 countries in the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) region.

In its fourth-quarter 2022 Global Risk Report, which is based on the company's proprietary country risk-rating model report titled 'GlobalData Country Risk Index' (GCRI), GlobalData noted that the UAE ranked first in terms of managing food security. In second spot was Israel and in third position Saudi Arabia.

Other countries in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) fared equally well, with Qatar in fourth spot, and Bahrain in ninth

position, while data on Oman was not available in the GCRI. An earlier report on food security by the Economist Insider, titled Global Food Security Index (GFSI), had placed Oman in fourth spot in MENA in 2022.

GlobalData said that its latest quarterly report, which assesses current and future level of risk attached to food security in the region, highlights the crucial impact of structural issues and risks to food security in MENA. Among these risks are volatility in agricultural production, trade and supply-chain disruption, scarcity of natural resources, and increasing economic inequality.

The report pointed out that the Middle East and North Africa region depends mainly



on Russia and Ukraine for its imports of basic foodstuffs, which explains the high level of risk for the countries of the region, which went from 54 points to 54.3 points out of 100 points

in the index for the last quarter of 2022.

Analysts at GlobalData opined that many countries in the region depend on food imports, even as problems associated with food supply chains continue to create more challenges for their food security, due to factors including the conflict in Ukraine and Syria, and droughts in the countries of the Horn of Africa and Kenya.

In terms of the global ranking, Switzerland, Denmark and Singapore occupied the first three ranks in the index, which takes into account the latest data available in the field of macroeconomics and political, social, technological, environmental and legal considerations.

Ministry prepares categories of debt beneficiaries

A campaign organized during the holy month of Ramadan by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development to collect donations from the public to pay off the debts of citizens unable to do so netted around KD12 million. Revealing the donation figure,

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, said that a coordination meeting was held recently to determine the categories of debtors who would benefit

from the debt relief payments.

The coordination committee comprising members from the Ministry of Social Affairs and representatives of the Implementation Department at the Ministry of Justice, to discuss the mechanism, controls and conditions for the debt relief payments. Al-Mutairi also indicated that the emphasis during the meeting was not to include debtors who owed large sums of money, and also prioritize citizens in debt who are currently on the travel ban lists.

He added that the Ministry of Affairs is working on determining the groups of debtors whose owings would be paid from the money collected during the campaign, indicating that in light of the huge number of debtors, priority will be given to certain groups over others, such as people with special needs, the elderly and women.

Inauguration of 5th Pharmacy of Metro Medical Group



MMC Pharmacy, the 5th pharmacy of Metro Medical Group, which has many years of emergency services expertise in Kuwait, was inaugurated. IBPC Joint Secretary Suresh KP, Kuwait Auqaf Ministry Under Secretary Meshari Al Sultan and Dr. Atbi Al Shemmari were present.

The new pharmacy operation has been started in view of the excess footfall in the existing pharmacy at Farwaniya of MMC Group. Mustafa Hamza, Group Chairman & CEO of Metro Medical Group, stated that the goal of launching this pharmacy is to take into account the convenience of those who seek services in Metro with facilities like Insurance Cards and to reduce their waiting time related to medicines.

The management of Metro Medical Group has requested everyone to utilize the huge offers made available to those who visit the

Metro branch that opened in Fahaheel and offer is valid till 23rd of May 2023.

The administration added that there are discounts for MRI scan, urology, and cardiology in Super Metro Salmiya as well as CT scanning in Metro Farwaniya.

In the near future, more medical centers will be opened by MMC Group in other parts of Kuwait like Khaitan, Jahra etc.

By the second week of the following month, Metro Medical Group will formally inaugurate the operation theatre at Super Metro in Salmiya.

Surgical department facilities will be supporting especially expat community in an affordable manner for surgical requirements.

Dr. Biji Basheer and Ibrahim Kutty, members of the Metro Management Group also attended the inauguration.

Students urged to be ambassadors of knowledge, morals

The English Academy (TEA) recently celebrated the graduation of its 27th batch of IGCSE students, which included over 45 students from various Gulf, Arab and foreign countries.

The ceremony, which was held at the Regency Hotel, was attended by a number of officials, as well as the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the New Generation Educational Foundation, Adela Musaed Al-Sayer, and the Foundation's Director General and Executive Director, Khaleda Yousef Al-Mudhaf.

In a speech she delivered during the ceremony, Adela Al-Sayer, urged the graduates to be ambassadors of knowledge and morals in all areas of life, so that the school could be proud of their achievements. She stressed on the importance of continuing along the path of progress and success, and to pay special attention to science, as it would help in the renaissance of nations.

She stated that The English Academy was established immediately after the liberation from the brutal Iraqi invasion of the country, and



since then those in charge of it have made great efforts to develop the work until the school reached its current distinguished level as one of the best English schools in Kuwait.

For her part, Khaleda Al-Mudhaf affirmed the academy's keenness to harness all capabilities in order to qualify distinguished graduates to join the best universities around the world. She pointed to the great efforts made starting with the selection of staff and teachers from England at the highest level to teach basic subjects to the British system.

In a speech he delivered, the principal of the school, Stewart Cowden, praised the efforts of graduates and wished them more success. Students Munira Al-Yassin and Karen then delivered a speech to the graduates, urging their colleagues to move forward in achieving their dreams and plans for the future.

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Humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society

Tapping into the untapped

By Mercedes Varquez

Special to The Times Kuwait

With more than 15 years of experience at the United Nations agency, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mazen AboulHosn, the IOM chief of mission in Kuwait, has extensive experience on issues related to migrants and migration, as well as on various aspects of human trafficking.

In a recent talk with Mercedes Vazquez, creator of the podcast, 'Tapping into the Untapped', the IOM Chief in Kuwait said that the intergovernmental organization was committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.



on several migration topics including migration governance, labor migration, and in countering human trafficking, as well as in the implementation of the objectives of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)," said the IOM Chief of Mission.

Elaborating on global mobility and its latest trends, AboulHosn said: "Migration is a very complex issue, and sometimes it can be exacerbated by misinformation and politicization, and this is something that can be alarming sometimes. Migration is also shaped by various factors, including economic, geographical, and demographic, among others. So it is not accurate to consider migration from only one aspect, or treat it as a single homogenous issue.

"If we look at some trends in migration nowadays, the estimate is that there were

to the United States, followed by the migration of people from Syria to Turkey — but in this case the refugees are mainly Syrian refugees displaced to Turkey. The third largest migrant corridor is that from India to the United Arab Emirates, where again it is mainly labor migrants. In addition to international migrants there are also around 103 million people who are internally displaced within the borders of their own countries, and then there are the refugees.

"Safe, orderly and regular migration as outlined by the GCM is also a key component in realizing the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although SDG indicator 10.7 concerns safe and orderly migration, migration is a cross-cutting issue in all 17 SDGs. So a lot of work we currently do is on mainstreaming migration and development, and highlighting the value of migrants to societies they live and work in, and the important role migrants play in helping countries, both their source and destination places, to achieve their SDGs.

"According to the latest World Bank figures, a total of \$626 billion was remitted by migrants to their home countries in 2022. These remittances were often the only source of income for recipient migrant families back home," said Mr. AboulHosn.

Turning to how climate change repercussions were contributing to the displacement of people and the need to raise awareness on the multi-dimensional impact of climate change in reshaping our world, AboulHosn said: "Changes in temperature, rising sea levels, increase in frequency and intensity of rains, droughts and sandstorms are leading to a hike in the number of people being displaced around the world.

"When combined with physical, social and environmental vulnerabilities climate change may undermine food, water and therefore economic security. All of which are pillars for our safety and welfare as humans, and also for achieving the SDGs." In 2021, globally 22.3 million people were displaced because of weather related disasters such as storms, floods, wildfires and droughts. And the prediction is that by 2050, in North Africa alone, internally displaced climate migrants could number around 9 percent of the total projected population in this sub-region.



Mazen AboulHosn
The IOM chief of mission in Kuwait

According to the latest World Bank figures, a total of \$626 billion was remitted by migrants to their home countries in 2022. These remittances were often the only source of income for recipient migrant families back home.

around 281 million international migrants in 2020, which was then almost 3.6 percent of the global population.

"If we look at the region with the largest number of migrants, Europe tops the list with 30.9 percent of the international migrant population, followed by Asia with 30.5 percent, North America, 20.9 percent, and Africa with 9 percent of total migrant population.

"Looking at migration based on corridors along which migrants travel, as they move from their country of origin to the country of their choice, one can see distinct pathways. The largest migration corridor is from Mexico

"By 2050, without concrete climate and development action, effects of climate change can induce displacement, loss of livelihood, especially those sectors such as agriculture and tourism that rely heavily on weather and climate. It can weaken governance and increase competition over natural resources. And in some cases, it can also lead to political instability and conflict.

"And what is also more important is that the number of internally displaced climate migrants could be reduced through aid, migration-support actions, evidence based research to understand the drivers of climate change, and to plan for each phase of migration through positive adaptation. That's why we initiated the Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change. It is a strategy for 2021-2030 and its main purpose is to respond to major changes that occur in global, regional, national discussions on migration, environment and climate change. In particular, we are trying to base it on evidence and the knowledge that we generate from across the world," concluded the IOM Chief in Kuwait.



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Survey reveals growth in region to slow in 2023

A poll conducted among leading economists on the economic prospects of the region in 2023, by news agency Reuters revealed that the growth in the region is expected to slow down sharply from the highs witnessed in 2022.

The survey held from 6 to 25 April showed that the consensus among the 16 economists polled was that economic growth will decline in Kuwait this year at a much greater rate than that of its peers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, falling to 1.5 percent from the 7.9 percent witnessed last year.

The slowdown in growth is expected throughout the region, with the economy in Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer in the world, growing 3.2 percent this year, less than half of its 8.7 percent growth rate in 2022. The kingdom is expected to maintain this growth rate going into 2024 as well.

In the UAE, the second largest economy among the GCC countries, economic growth is expected to slow to 3.7 percent in 2023 and 4.0 percent in 2024, far lower than the 7.6 percent growth recorded last year. Growth is also expected to slow in Qatar and Bahrain, to 2.7 percent, while the economy of Oman is expected to grow by 2.6 percent in 2023.

The news agency said the slowdown in economic growth is not confined to the region, as growth is also expected to slow in most major economies this year in light of the impact of raising interest rates on economic activity, along with the impact of high inflation on consumer demand.

However, inflation estimates for the Gulf countries were lower than their counterparts for many major economies. The inflation rate in the region is expected to range between 2.1 percent and 3.3 percent this year, and to decline below that in 2024.

Most of the GCC economies are also expected to continue to enjoy double-digit current account surpluses in 2023 despite concerns about slowing oil production. Only Oman and Bahrain are expected to post single digit surpluses.

The survey indicated that the economies of the GCC states are affected by the decline in revenues from crude oil sales and production cuts. Oil prices have risen by about 20 percent since their decline to the lowest level this year at around \$70 a barrel on 20 March, mainly supported by the OPEC+ alliance's decision to cut oil production by about 1.16 million barrels per day.

James Swanston, emerging markets expert at Capital Economics, the UK based economic research firm, said that oil production cuts and lower prices will deliver a double whammy that could lead to a sharp slowdown in GDP growth in the



region this year.

Moreover, the prospects for achieving more gains will be greatly weakened in the coming months due to the slowdown in global demand, which is not good news for the GCC countries, which are heavily reliant on hydrocarbon revenues.



MoH shuts cosmetic clinics violating rules

Ministry of Health (MoH) has closed down 33 private cosmetic surgery clinics after they were found to have violated medical advertisement rules through their advertisements on social media platforms.



In a press statement the ministry clarified that the 'temporary' closures were in line with Law 70/2020 on the profession of cosmetic surgeon and related ministerial decrees, especially Decree 87/2023 on public morality, code of medical ethics and patient's privacy.

The ministry added that it had already taken legal action against the clinics, and the 33 doctors involved, by forwarding the case to the relevant authorities for further legal action, besides temporarily closing down the clinics until the related investigations were completed.

IEF distributes Iftar kits during Ramadan

As part of its social responsibility initiative, Indian Engineers Forum (IEF) Kuwait, organized the distribution of Iftar grocery kits at labor camps in Mahboula on 18 April. Over a hundred grocery kits were distributed among the more than 550 workers living in these quarters.



The grocery kit distribution was led by Vaikunth R. Shenoy, founder and ex-president of IEF, Evans George, current president of IEF, Bency K. Baby, the general secretary, Sreeraj Rajan, secretary of IEF, along with other committee members.

IEF also announced that its second Blood Donation Camp will be arranged in May, as another extension of the forum's social responsibility initiative.

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GTD reduces validity period of driving licenses

General Traffic Department (GTD), affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, is reportedly stopping the issuing of driving licenses that are valid for three years for expatriates. New driving licenses and license renewals will be limited to a period of only one year, whether in person or online.

According to ministry sources, the stoppage of three-year licenses comes in the wake of finding that some expatriates



renew their licenses for three years and then change their profession to one that is not eligible to hold a driving license.

On another note, statistics from the traffic sector showed that from 22 to 28 April in the days leading and after the Eid holidays, traffic and rescue personnel dealt with 263 major accidents and 961 minor incidents. In addition, 34,848 violations were issued, 37 vehicles were impounded and 76 juveniles were arrested for driving without a license.

Ministries to retire senior employees with 30 years of service

Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Ministry of Finance are said to be completing the preparation of a list of all senior officials and supervisors in the public sector who have completed 30 years of service. Once the list is finalized, those who are listed will be requested to accept mandatory retirement so as to make room for young people to take over the affairs of the country.

The indemnity and end of service payments will be settled through a new mechanism where the ministry, in coordination with the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) will purchase the employee's remaining years until actual retirement age and adjust accordingly.

Council of Ministers has reportedly made the filling of currently vacant positions in various government entities a priority. This follows the latest State Audit Bureau report which calls on the authorities to urgently fill leadership and supervisory positions that have remained vacant for far too long. The bureau report noted that the vacuum created at the top negatively impacts the performance and effective functioning of the concerned government entity.



Separately, the Council of Ministers is also said to be considering approving the appointment of several new senior officials in government agencies, and has requested the CSC to recommend prospective candidates after conducting interviews with the candidates.

Figures from government sources show that 116 senior positions in 22 government agencies are waiting to be filled, and that the CSC is coordinating with relevant government agencies to develop new mechanisms for appointment.

Kuwait among five places that emit harmful gases

Media reports indicate that Kuwait was among five regions in the world where oil companies were identified as violating environmental rules. Kuwait was implicated for allegedly releasing greenhouse gases, including methane that damages the atmosphere and causes global warming. Four of the remaining sites were located in the United States.

Reports indicate that advanced high-resolution satellites that can monitor pollutants that are not visible to regular ground-based monitoring stations, detected dense clouds of methane gases over a period of 20 days in October 2022 near one of the oil drilling sites in Kuwait's Burgan oilfield.

At the time, the company operating the drilling process had claimed that its monitoring systems had not detected any heavy leakage of polluting gases from its site. Methane gas is reportedly 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions and can contribute more to climate change in the short term.

Although oil companies are always motivated to reduce the increase in methane gas emissions, in the short term this could involve more investments and partial

disruption in their work to change equipment and machinery to make their emissions safer, but this affects their bottom line.

While fines and implementation of penalties for oil companies over increased methane emissions may be insignificant to the cash-rich oil operators, the same cannot be said of the reputational risks and investor anger they could face, as well as potential loss of business, if seen to be contributing to global warming.

Scientists say that the most effective approach to mitigating emissions around the world is to combine high-resolution satellite systems with aerial surveys and sensors on the ground, to provide operators, governments and public opinion around the world with accurate information about polluting methane emissions. Many commercial and government interests are currently driving the acceleration of the launch of high-resolution satellites, with so far at least three high-resolution satellites launched to monitor gas emissions around the world. Four more such sophisticated satellites are expected to enter service before the end of 2024.

Oil and gas operators themselves have an interest in hi-resolution satellite data, as it allows them to identify emissions leaks along thousands of kilometers of oil and gas pipelines or remote facilities. This helps them rectify leaks and potential penalties, as governments that intend to achieve global climate goals seek to monitor and measure progress in this area periodically.

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Thought for the week

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

- Viktor Frankl
Austrian neurologist

Antioxidants Boomers

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



I always mention the word antioxidant in my articles, and a lot of people have since asked me to explain more about what are antioxidants.

So here you go:

Oxidative reaction: First we need to understand what an oxidative reaction is. High levels of blood cholesterol, high levels of blood sugar, high blood pressure, smoking, the surrounding pollution, and different types of radiation create in your body what is known as 'an oxidative reaction'.

Under the effects of this oxidative reaction, free radicals are generated in your body, which in turn will generate several harmful chemical reactions that lead to severe diseases like heart disease, arthritis, different types of cancer and even more elevated blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Antioxidants: As everything in our body is balanced, here comes the role of antioxidants. In reality, the antioxidants are some body substances, which completely cut the chain of further oxidation of these free radicals.

An eating plan containing plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and nuts can supply all the antioxidants your body needs. The major antioxidants include Vitamin C, various kinds of berries, dark chocolate, green tea, olive oil, red wine and many more.

Antioxidants are a booming market today with a wide variety of antioxidants available for everything from enhancing memory, immunity and athletic performance, as well as to treat various diseases. The list of such products is too long to reproduce here fully, but below is a list of the most popular antioxidants and their benefits.

Alpha lipoic acid: Found in broccoli, spinach, beef steak, liver, yeast.

Provides protection against neuropathy (disorder of the nerves that are connected to muscles, skin and internal organs), improves glucose blood level in diabetes, protects against heart diseases and cataracts (blurred vision)

Berries: Including, but not limited to, blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries. Beneficial for Heart health, cancer protection, antiaging, diabetes prevention and urinary tract protection.

Citrus fruits and vegetables: Treats diseases of blood vessels and lymphatic system (which contains immune cells that protect the body against virus and bacteria).

Dark chocolate that contains cocoa flavonoids: Protects against hypertension, heart diseases and skin damage. Lowers stress and anxiety.

Olive oil (polyphenols): good for heart health, cancer protection, antimicrobial activity, lowers cholesterol and LDL levels.

Pomegranate: Recommended for heart and circulatory health, prevents cancer and hypertension

Grape and grape seed extracts, including red wine, because of the antioxidant 'resveratrol', which provides protection against cardiovascular diseases, against cancer and improve athletic performance.

Soy: Soy beans, soy milk, soy proteins and other soy products have been found helpful in treating menopausal symptoms, are good for bone health and protects against breast cancer.

Tea: Helps in the treatment of liver diseases, improves immunity function and weight loss.

Vitamin A: Found in carrot, tomato, spinach, sweet potato, mango, dried apricot, milk, egg yolk. Provides protection against heart diseases, against vision loss and promotes skin health.

Vitamin C: Found in orange, kiwi, pineapple, broccoli, pepper, parsley, cauliflower

Boosts immune system, improves skin health, and helps in iron absorption

Vitamin E: Abundant in nuts, almonds, peanut butter, walnuts, avocados, sunflower oil, egg yolks. Good for improving heart health, diabetes prevention, decreases LDL levels and increases HDL, and recommended for enhancing athletic performance.

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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

Coconut-Jaggery Semolina Halwa



Jaggery Halwa, a traditional Indian dessert, is popular in many places in India. This recipe is for a traditional semolina halwa, which is very healthy. It is a perfect recipe if you are on a Keto diet and craving some good vegan food.
Total time: 30 min.

Ingredients

- 1 cup semolina
- 1/4 cup virgin coconut oil
- 3/4 cup chopped jaggery or Jaggery powder
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup grated fresh coconut
- 4-5 chopped dry apricots
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tbsp dry ginger powder

For garnishing

- Chopped almonds and pistachios
- Dry coconut shreds.

Directions

- In a deep pan, mix together jaggery, cardamom powder, dry ginger powder and water.
- Heat until the jaggery dissolves. Set aside.
- Heat coconut oil in a heavy bottom kadai or nonstick pan.
- Add in suji and grated coconut. Roast on a low flame until it attains a brownish color.
- Add in the jaggery water and coconut milk.
- Cook till all the milk and water has dried and the mixture starts to leave the sides of the pan.
- Turn off the flame.
- Garnish with chopped almonds-pistachio and dry coconut shreds.
- Serve hot or warm.



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

MoI deports tens of thousands of illegal workers

Since the start of the year and until 28 April, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) arrested and deported over 11,000 residency violators and illegal workers from the country.

According to sources at Mol, the arrests were made upon directives of First Deputy

Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas. The directives were within the framework of the government's policy of amending the demographics and prosecuting residency



violators and illegal workers. The campaign will reportedly be intensified over the coming weeks and across all governorates of the country to ensure law and order is maintained and to target violators, as well as those who harbor violators, and refer them to the concerned authorities.

ASFOK holds free medical camp for Filipino workers

Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Association of Filipino Organizations in Kuwait (ASFOK) held a medical mission at the Filipino Resource Center of the Migrant Workers Office (MWOFR) recently. The event was attended by more than two hundred Filipinos who were examined by eminent doctors and those requiring medication received free medicines.

Organizations under the parasol of ASFOK namely, Philippine Nurses Association in Kuwait, Pinoy Ambulance Nurses in Kuwait and AKO OFW were among the three main organizations which spearheaded the event. Medication for the patients and breakfast for all was donated by various organizations and individuals. Different organizations

and individuals also donated several medicines as well as breakfast for everyone. Two volunteer medical doctors were present for the consultations, Dr. Emilia Zapanta and Dr. Sameh Aziz. Officials from the Medical Response Team of the Embassy of the Philippines, officials from Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and Assistant Labor Attaché Cathy Duladul of Migrant Workers Office were also present during the event.

In his brief message on the occasion, the Philippine Labor Attaché Atty. Manuel Dimaano thanked ASFOK for organizing the medical mission, as well as for the tireless efforts of all volunteers and donors who made the mission a huge success. "I thank everyone for their generosity by coming today

and delivering these services for our Filipino workers. This mission is not just for them but for their families back home so they can have peace of mind that their family members here are safe and we are doing the best we can for them so they can be with their families as soon as possible," commented the Labor Attaché.

Old and young OFWs who sought medical attention were grateful for the event organized for them. "I thank these angels who came here today at the resource center and brought medicines and doctors to check on our conditions," said Patricia, an OFW with swollen legs due to varicose veins problem. Al Ghanim Industries Medical Director Sameh Aziz, a regular volunteer in the resource center medical mission said, "If you have the capacity to extend your help



to charitable events such as this, why not be a part of them? I have been a volunteer to the medical missions at the Filipino resource Center several times and I urge others who have the capability to help to volunteer their service."

ASFOK Chairperson Engr. Dennis Querubin commented that this is

not the first time ASFOK organized a medical mission in the resource center and that the Association's efforts were to provide assistance in any way possible to OFWs so as to enrich their lives. He thanked everyone for their generosity and kindness for coming forward and being part of such a noble project.

ALSAYER Achieves ISO 45001:2018 for Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard



LSAYER Holding has achieved a significant milestone by being awarded the ISO Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard certificate on 23rd March 2023 for its two Automotive service locations.

The official certificate awarding ceremony was held at Group Headquarters at Kuwait Free Trade Zone and was attended by Mubarak Naser Al Sayer Chief Executive officer, Bengt Schultz Chief Operating officer, Ibrahim Al-Fouzan Senior Business Director Toyota Service Division, Mahmoud Abou-Zahr Senior Business Director Lexus Division and Nehad AlHaj Ali Group Manager Corporate Excellence along with Senior Management of Bureau Veritas Group.

On this occasion Mubarak Naser Al Sayer stated that "ALSAYER Group always emphasize on Health and Safety of customers, employees, and all stakeholders. We always aim to provide a safe working environment with a healthy work life balance, this certification is just the beginning of our recognition in this journey".

According to Bengt Kurt Schultz “This formal certification ensures that our Group Health and Safety measures are of top priority, and we have demonstrated during challenging time of COVID-19 Pandemic by introducing digitization of many processes and reducing employee/customer touch points”.

The process of recertification involved a thorough assessment of the company's management systems and compliance to the requirements of the ISO 45001:2018 standards. The audits explored the implementation in ALSAYER Group Toyota Service Al Rai-2 and Lexus Quick Service, taking a holistic view from leadership, monitoring, measurement, as well as evidence of successful implementation of continual improvement processes. The audit was performed by Bureau Veritas during January 2023.

ALSAYER Group is committed towards formal recognition of more ISO international standards in its journey of delivering excellence to customers and society.



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LuLu Exchange on expansion mode with the opening of 32nd branch in Fintas and 278th globally

LuLu Exchange today opened its 32nd branch in Kuwait at Fintas in the presence of senior company management.

A leading service provider of cross-border payments and foreign currency exchange, the new branch strengthens LuLu Exchange's strategic network of branches to bring its services closer to people and businesses in Kuwait. The new branch marks the 278th global branch of LuLu Financial Holdings and speaking at the inauguration, Mr. Adeb Ahamed, MD of LuLu Financial Holdings, said, "Kuwait is one of our key markets, and with the country showing an increasing shift towards digital payments, the expansion of our network is in line with our hybrid approach to bring our services

closer to our customers while simultaneously engaging with them as they transition to digital payments."

The company's digital money transfer app, LuLu Money, is highly rated for its security and convenience and is aligned with Kuwait's digital transformation efforts. LuLu Exchange is a part of LuLu Financial Holdings, an ISO 9001:2015 certified global financial services enterprise headquartered in Abu Dhabi. The group operates over 278 branches and digital payment solutions across several GCC countries such as Oman, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, as well as in India, Bangladesh, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Visit www.luluexchange.com to know more.

Grand Hyper inaugurates 33rd branch in Kuwait



Grand Hypermarket, Kuwait's leading retail chain, has inaugurated its 33rd outlet in Kuwait, in the suburb of Hawally. The latest branch of the popular hypermarket is located in Block 11, Qutaibah Bin Muslim Street, opposite Wafa Boys School, on an area of 11,000 square feet.

Among the top dignitaries present at the inaugural ceremony were Jassim Mohammad Khameez Al Sharah, Saad Mohammad, Jamal Al Dosari, and Grand Hyper Regional Director Ayub Kacheri. The CEO of GrandHyper Mohammad Suneer, DRO Tahseer Ali, COO Rahil Basim, and other special guests, management representatives and well-wishers attended the inauguration ceremony.

The new outlet offers a range of fresh products, including fruits, vegetables, meat and seafood from around the world. The store features an

in-house bakery and hot food products prepared with care and hygiene. The outlet also offers a wide variety of products that cater to the tastes and needs of expatriates and Kuwaiti nationals ranging from groceries, home appliances, electronics, mobile phones, apparel and footwear.



Waste today burdens future generations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

were just dumping grounds without proper waste management facilities. Even the six currently operational landfills are also not fully engineered; they do not have adequate protective layers beneath the landfill to prevent seepage from the waste being absorbed by the soil below, nor do they have the equipment to collect landfill gas. Only two engineered waste treatment plants are at present operational in Kuwait, one in Al-Wafra, which treats industrial waste-water, and the other in Al-Shuaiba, dedicated to treating industrial solid-waste.

According to the most recent geometric survey conducted by EPA, in 2020 the area containing landfilled waste was nearly 20km², or around 0.1 percent of Kuwait's total land area. To put this area in perspective, the gross land area of Kuwait's largest stadium, the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium in Ardiya, is only around 0.4 km². In other words, you could construct more than 50 such stadiums in the total landfilled area of Kuwait.

Much of household waste destined for these landfills are trashed food and other material with high organic content. Besides organic material, the waste also includes significant amounts of economically valuable recyclable material such as paper, packing cartons, electronic, electric and plastic waste. But, since the recyclable items are not segregated at the time of being dumped by consumers, or after they are collected, much of this waste goes unrecovered into the landfills.

Meanwhile, organic matter in the trash undergoes natural biochemical decomposition, and over time water from decomposed material, aided by rain water seeps down into the soil as leachates that are harmful to plant and animal life in the area. Eventually the seepage percolates deeper into soil contaminating Kuwait's limited groundwater supplies. Degradation of organic matter also generates landfill gases such as methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) that, unless collected properly, will contribute to global warming and climate change.

Studies by the EPA and others show the major landfills in Kuwait currently emit a total of over 47,500 cubic meters (m³) of landfill gas per hour, or the equivalent of 4.5 million tons of CO₂ equivalents per year. Prevention of these emissions with proper landfill gas collection

systems could make a significant dent to Kuwait's greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to protecting and preserving the environment for future generations.

Even though the last garbage trucks have stopped plying trash to the closed landfill sites, they already enclose an estimated 56 million m³ of waste that continues to impact the environment and the health of people living in nearby areas. Natural outbreaks of fires have engulfed closed landfill areas, with several instances of spontaneous fires erupting at the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh landfill near Kuwait International Airport. Fires have also in the past occurred at the Al-Rheyia landfill, which was a graveyard for millions of used tires before they were shifted to a new recycling plant in Al Salmi.

Unless long-term remediation work is done on the accumulated waste, closed landfills will continue to pose a threat to the environment and to the health of people living in proximity to these sites. Moreover, any hope of making these closed landfills available for land use in the near future remains limited, as other hazards lurk beneath the surface of these landfills.

Besides gas emissions that lead to potential explosions and fires, the ground below landfills is also unstable. As the waste decays over the years the land above sinks down further. This land sinkage was highlighted during recent expansion work on Kuwait International Airport, which lies adjacent to the closed Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh landfill area. Contractors at the work site had to consider the potential for land sinkage and include additional firming of soil before work could proceed.

However, landfills are not necessarily a waste of limited land, they can be reimagined in creative ways, including converting them into nature reserves through planting of selected varieties of trees and shrubs known to decontaminate the soil naturally. Vegetation also helps firm up the underlying soil and could actually lead to a thriving ecosystem.

Additionally, using advanced landfill gas collection systems, highly potent greenhouse gases such as methane that emit from landfills could be collected and reused for energy generation, thereby providing an economic incentive for such investments. But sadly, in Kuwait, environmental issues have been accorded low-

priority by governments, lawmakers and the public at large.

Over the years, the economy has trumped ecology, with economic growth overriding the need to protect and preserve the environment. This indifference to environmental issues has been made abundantly clear on various occasions, including in the aftermath of the country's liberation in 1991. Impelled to rebuild the country in the wake of the widespread destruction inflicted by the Iraqi forces, Kuwait set forth on an ambitious path of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The priority focus understandably was on capping the blazing oil wells that were gushing out oil by the minute. Although the fires were an environmental hazard to the country and the region, the urgency to cap the wells stemmed largely from their value to the economy. Repairing damages caused to the environment during the occupation and subsequent war to liberate Kuwait, as well as the need to resuscitate devastated ecosystems were shelved, if not ignored by the authorities.

Kuwait's dawdling approach to environmental issues was evident in late December of last year, when Kuwait Oil Company, the country's main upstream oil operator, announced the awarding of the last tranche of tenders for its oil-field soil remediation program. The fact that the KD160 million tender, which aims to revive soil contaminated by the oil fires in 1991, was finally awarded more than three decades after the invasion, speaks volumes of the importance accorded to environmental issues in this country.

It was only in the wake of the humongous environmental damage sustained to its natural ecosystem and environment during the invasion that Kuwait even acknowledged the need for a separate entity to tackle environmental issues. Accordingly, in 1995, the government introduced a law to establish the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and mandated it to protect and preserve the environment of Kuwait. To its credit, the EPA has been doing yeoman service to the country and its environment since its inception.

As part of its aim to move the country towards a circular economy and promote a sustainable environment, the EPA initiated and developed the Kuwait National Waste Management Strategy (KNWMS) 2040. The Authority also

launched a multi-year study titled, 'Survey and Establishment of a Comprehensive Database for Waste Management in Kuwait' (eMISKWaste), to gather accurate data on landfills and current waste management processes in Kuwait.

The KNWMS aims to raise awareness among the public on responsible environmental behavior, and to provide accurate and timely information and data on environmental matters. The KNWMS also seeks to implement processes to separate, recycle and reduce more of the waste generated in the country. The EPA also spearheads an 'Environmental Week' each year in March that seeks to educate people about protecting the environment and natural resources in the country.

In a press statement ahead of this year's Environmental Week, which was held under the theme of 'Protecting the environment begins with you', from 6th to 12th March, the Chairman and Director General of EPA Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah urged citizens and residents to directly contribute to reducing the amount of waste they produce and help protect the environment. On a related note, in his remarks on the latest report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — the UN entity tasked to advance scientific knowledge about climate change caused by human activities — UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that pollutants created by human activities were responsible for virtually all global heating over the last 200 years. He added that the rate of temperature rise in the last half century was the highest in 2,000 years, and that concentrations of carbon dioxide were at their highest in at least two million years.

"The climate time-bomb is ticking, and the IPCC report is a how-to guide to defuse this bomb; it is a survival guide for humanity. The report is a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe. In short, our world needs climate action on all fronts — everything, everywhere, and all at once. Every country must be part of the solution. Demanding others move first only ensures humanity comes last," warned the secretary-general. We wish relevant authorities in Kuwait would read the UN report in its entirety and accord environment the priority it urgently needs.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Promise and Peril of Generative AI



Diane Coyle

Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, is the author, most recently, of *Cogs and Monsters: What Economics Is, and What It Should Be*

Ever since OpenAI released its ChatGPT chatbot last year, a growing number of analysts have been predicting that generative artificial intelligence will displace millions of workers and cause widespread economic upheaval. But how exactly will generative AI affect the global economy?

Recent estimates provide an indication of the looming labor-market disruption. Goldman Sachs economists, for example, anticipate that as many as 300 million full-time jobs could be automated as a result of the latest AI breakthroughs and that two-thirds of workers in Europe and the United States could be exposed to AI-based automation. A working paper by researchers at OpenAI finds that roughly 80% of the US workforce could see at least some of their tasks automated by the introduction of large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT. And some law firms and marketers have already begun to use generative AI tools.

But it is still unclear whether the new AIs will improve existing employees' productivity by taking routine tasks off their hands, or simply make workers technologically redundant. To be sure, many white-collar workers would be delighted if AI tools could take on dull tasks like keeping minutes during meetings, answering routine queries, or filing expense claims. But many believe — as Daron Acemoglu and Simon



smartphone and communication technologies like 4G and 5G wireless networks have transformed everyday life, leading to the creation of new sectors and business models. As of 2021, the average American spent roughly eight hours a day online, more than double the 2011 figure. The cloud computing and the e-commerce industries have grown rapidly, reflecting a labor market in which digital skills are increasingly a prerequisite for landing a high-paying job. Yet despite these technological advances, productivity growth has been dismal since the mid-2000s.

What explains this economic puzzle? While it is possible that digital technologies are simply not very productive, their widespread adoption suggests otherwise. A more plausible explanation is that it takes time to figure out how best to use new technologies. As a result, only a small minority of companies in the US and the United Kingdom have been able to use digital tools to boost their productivity and pull ahead.

In his 2022 book *The New Goliaths*, Boston University's James Bessen explores why companies are having trouble adapting to digital technologies. The complexity of advanced software, he argues, confers an advantage on the largest and most technologically sophisticated companies, because only they have the resources and know-how needed to adopt such tools and benefit from them.

Given the massive (and costly) computing power needed to use and maintain generative AI tools, it seems inevitable that this new technology will follow a similar path. If a handful of dominant companies use deep-learning algorithms like OpenAI's GPT-4 to build new services and products, they could enhance their market power and erect insurmountable barriers to entry.

But the true potential of these new technologies goes beyond their ability to enable a few companies to become more efficient or develop new products. To provide widespread productivity gains and create real value, generative AI models must change the way we produce things. After all, the most sustained productivity booms of the past 200 years have been the result of new technologies reshaping and rewiring our economic systems.

Consider, for example, how the introduction of interchangeable parts in the nineteenth century revolutionized manufacturing, or how Henry Ford's assembly line extended the division of labor inside the factory during the early twentieth century. In the 1980s, the just-in-time revolution reduced the need for massive inventories, and the globalization of supply

chains during the 2000s allowed for greater specialization. These process innovations, made possible by the emergence of new energy and communication technologies, drove economic growth by changing not just what companies produced, but how they produced.

Before the long-term usefulness of generative AI can become apparent, the hype and panic must subside. Whatever

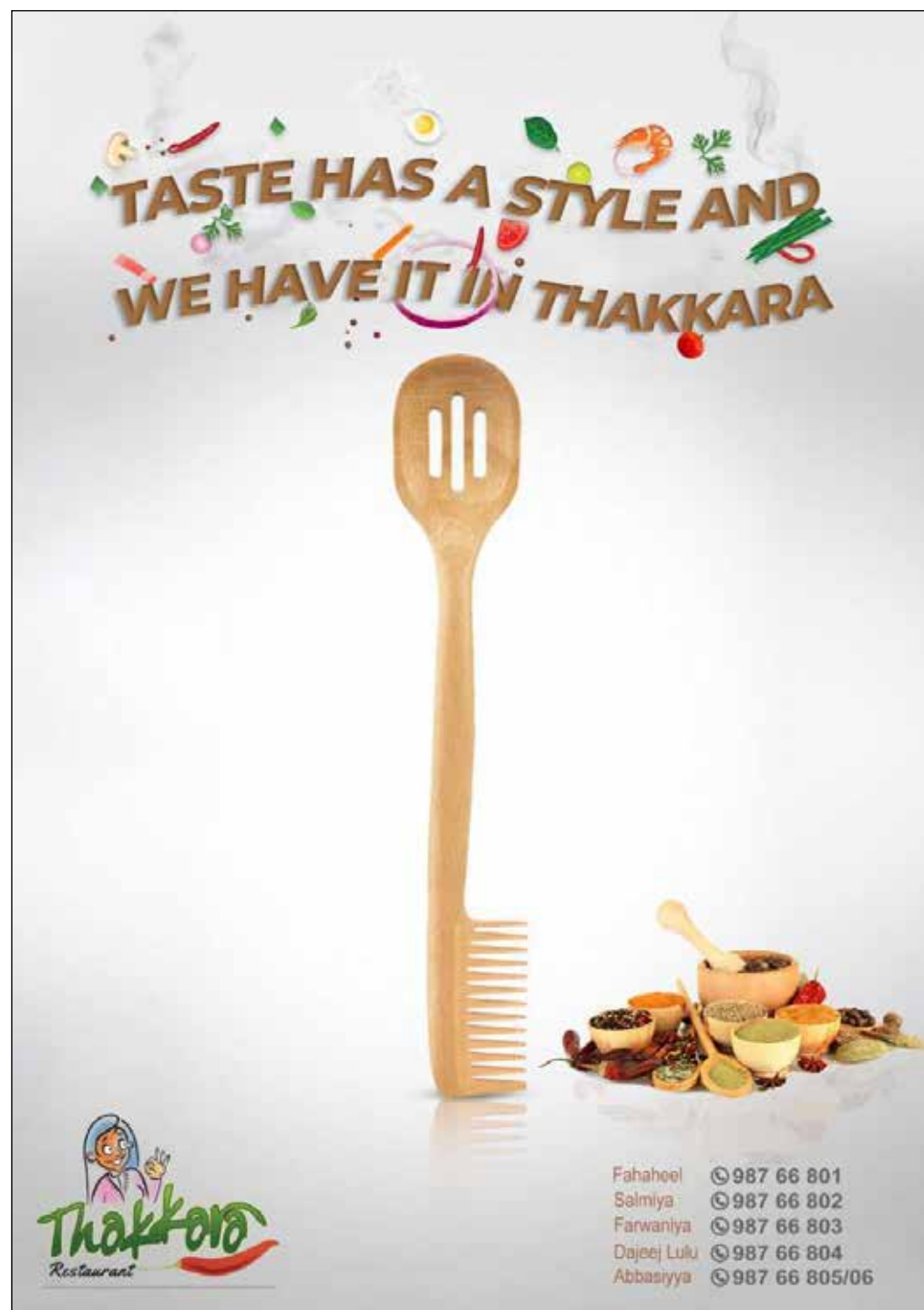
its shortcomings, its introduction clearly represents an astounding technological leap. To ensure that it benefits all of us as workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs, we must provide all businesses with access to these revolutionary tools, rather than hand the key to the next great economic transformation to a few large incumbents and hope they don't lock out everyone else.

“If a handful of dominant companies use deep-learning algorithms like OpenAI's GPT-4 to build new services and products, they could enhance their market power and erect insurmountable barriers to entry.”

Johnson recently argued — that the current generative AI arms race is geared toward reducing costs by replacing workers with algorithms, rather than harnessing the power of these technologies to augment human labor.

Another possibility though is that most companies will be slow to adopt this powerful technology because of a lack of skills and know-how. This is not necessarily reassuring either. While new technologies often disrupt livelihoods and industries, they could also bring about the productivity growth needed to boost incomes and living standards. After almost two decades of extremely slow productivity growth in most advanced economies, generative AI has emerged right when we need it. But to ensure that it delivers widely shared benefits, we must heed the lessons of the previous wave of digital innovation.

Over the past 20 years, innovations like the



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Looming Crackdown on Corporate Greenwashing



Richard Black

Senior Associate at the Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, is Co-Lead of the Net Zero Tracker.

Judging by the growing number of companies vowing to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions to zero these days, it may seem like the corporate world is finally taking the climate crisis seriously. According to the Net Zero Tracker, more than one-third of the world's largest publicly traded companies have announced such targets, up from one-fifth in late 2020.

While some of these corporate pledges appear to be genuine, others are clearly a fig leaf to obscure pollution as usual. One can easily imagine an oil executive telling an airline boss: "A net-zero target, some ads featuring trees, and everyone will love us."

If that was the plan, it is rapidly falling apart, owing to a slew of regulatory decisions and court actions that signal a crackdown on corporate greenwashing. And last year's report by the United Nations High-Level Expert Group on Net-Zero Emissions Commitments, which provided detailed recommendations for maintaining the integrity of such pledges, heralds limits on companies' ability to make promises they have no intention of keeping.

New regulations in France and the United Kingdom, for example, aim to prevent advertisers from making extravagant claims about the carbon neutrality of their products. Research commissioned by the UK's Advertising Standards Authority found that when people hear such a claim, they assume that an absolute reduction in emissions has occurred. So, the ASA's updated guidelines instruct

companies to avoid claiming carbon neutrality if the emissions associated with the advertised product were merely offset.

The French climate law, passed in 2021 and amended last year, goes further. To claim carbon neutrality, the product must be neutral across its entire life cycle. Companies must disclose how emissions were avoided, reduced, and offset (the order is important). They must also show how these offsets qualify as measurable, verifiable, permanent, and additional. Companies that get it wrong could face a €100,000 (\$110,000) fine for misleading consumers.

“Corporates need to reduce emissions along the entire value chain, phase out fossil fuels, invest in renewable energy, stop lobbying for high-carbon industries, disclose emissions annually, have independent verification, and so on.”

Underlying this trend is the obvious mismatch between what some companies say and what they do. After all, one does not need to be a sleuth to figure out that when a company can claim that a barrel of oil, a cargo of liquefied natural gas, or some tar sands bitumen is carbon-neutral, something has gone wrong. A spate of recent lawsuits promises to draw a line in the (tar) sand. Over the past year, companies such as food giant Danone Waters, cement maker Holcim, oil companies TotalEnergies, BP, and Shell, cosmetics manufacturer Beiersdorf (Nivea), and airline KLM have been sued in various countries for making misleading sustainability claims. The Australia Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, has filed a complaint

with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission claiming that the government's own certification scheme, Climate Active, is misleading under national consumer law, because it assures people that products are carbon-neutral when they are not.

Companies' net-zero pledges look just as flimsy under scrutiny. For example, a recent report by the Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor examined the net-zero plans of 24 major corporations purporting to be 'climate leaders' and found numerous flaws, loopholes, and omissions. On average, according to the report, these companies will cut just 36 percent

with the 2015 Paris climate agreement's targets. Such plans must include measures to reduce emissions along the entire value chain, phase out fossil fuels, invest in renewable energy, abstain from lobbying for high-carbon industries, disclose emissions annually, have reductions data independently verified, and so on. An ad campaign, a cheery speech, and some tree-planting will no longer do.

Companies without detailed transition plans in place can expect regulatory as well as legal action, as more and more countries require corporations to disclose climate-related risks. The European Union, India, New Zealand, and Switzerland are expected to join the UK and China by introducing such measures this year, followed by Canada and South Korea in 2025. The International Organization for Standardization has also recently published its own set of net-zero guidelines, providing regulators with clear rules and criteria for credible climate strategies.

But if the world is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, regulators must insist on independent verification of corporate claims, interim targets, and binding commitments to phase out fossil fuels. In countries where national net-zero plans rely on offsets and wishful thinking, citizens must use all the legal tools at their disposal possible to force their governments to do the hard work that a credible decarbonization path demands.

While there is still much work to be done, a carbon-neutral future is within reach. Net-zero targets now cover 91 percent of global GDP, compared with 16 percent just four years ago. But to have any hope of meeting the Paris agreement's targets, the first step is to ensure that governments and companies are setting realistic goals that they can back up with credible data. We can see the right path ahead, but the right decisions are still needed to ensure it is taken.

of their emissions by their net-zero target year. Moreover, their plans imply a median reduction of 15 percent by the end of the decade, rather than halving emissions, as the current science says is necessary. Similarly, an earlier report by CDP found that fewer than one in 200 companies that submitted climate data to its environmental-disclosure platform have devised credible transition plans.

The UN group's recommendations, commissioned and endorsed by Secretary-General António Guterres, are a potential game changer. As they become mainstreamed, companies will no longer be able to claim that they have a credible net-zero plan unless they have set a decarbonization pathway compatible



By Shoug AlShirazi

Special to The Times Kuwait

Bali, the most popular tourist destination in Indonesia, is the quintessential tropical paradise offering invigorating experiences for the senses, from waking up to the aroma of fresh flowers and smoke from exotic incense sticks wafting into one's hotel room in the morning, to the gentle sound of gongs and bells that signal the passing of a parade of Balinese dressed in white shirts and tops. It is the rich culture, ancient traditions, and surreal landscapes that have been enchanting tourists who come to the island over the past 100 years..

Bali is an island where you can realize your wildest dreams of living on a tropical island and find any number of adventurous things to do such as capturing the photos of a lifetime on the Bali Swing as you swing high over a valley of rice fields, lush green jungle and a river flowing down below and breathtaking views in the background. Swinging out on the Bali Swing should be on your bucket list of things to do while in Bali.

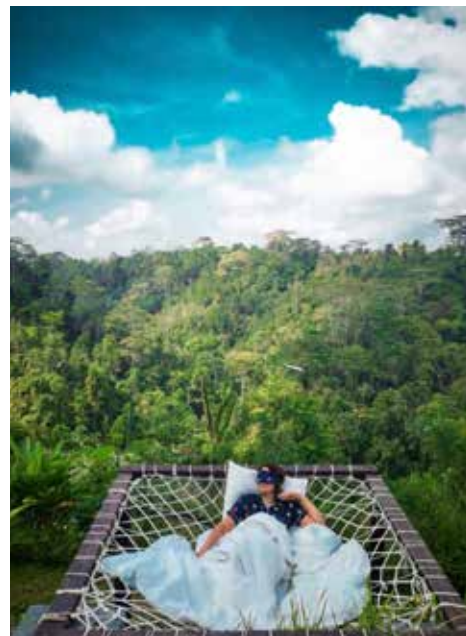
Another fantastic Bali photo opportunity, comes from the dramatic views of green paddy fields that lie on terraces on the slopes across a valley. It is a very popular view as the ancient valley is within easy reach of the city, but it has a timeless quality irrespective of the tourists gathered there. Local elders who own and cultivate the land often invite visitors to sample their green coconut drinks, as well as to purchase woven hats that they make from coconut leaves. Some will even pose with you for photos (usually for a small fee).

Because the verdant surroundings, of green rice fields, slender coconut palms and other colorful foliage, was so beautiful, I decided to stay for one night of my two-night stay there living in a wooden hut perched in the midst of this green environment. For my second-night, I chose to stay in a bubble tent set up in the nearby forest, which provided an experience of living right in the lap of nature.

When in Bali, remember to pay a visit to the mysterious Boeing 737 that is parked most incredulously in the middle of a limestone quarry. Located along the Raya Nusa Dua Selatan Highway, the plane was

BALI

A paradise on Earth



reportedly transported to the spot in parts and then reassembled by its owner, an Australian tourist. The owner had plans to transform the inside of the plane to a restaurant, but it is said he ran out of money and decided to abandon his plans and plane in the quarry. Visitors can only view the abandoned 737 from a distance as onsite security keeps people away from the plane.

Moving out of the city you are quickly surrounded by paddy fields and thick forested hills. The roads lead you through small villages and isolated temples perched on the slopes of the hills, which makes the place a perfect place for a bicycle tour. Visiting a coffee plantation is another interesting activity you can do in Bali. The coffee farms are also one of the best places to buy souvenirs to bring back home.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



In the highlands there are dozens of tumbling waterfalls where you can go for a swim, which lead into the rushing rivers where people go white water rafting. Or if you are feeling adventurous you can spend your time jumping off waterfalls, abseiling, or a day of canyoning.

The Ubud Monkey Forest is a nature reserve and temple complex in Ubud, Bali,



that houses approximately 340 long-tailed Macaque monkeys. A visit to the complex and its large monkey population provide for an enjoyable experience and great opportunity for photography. I do recommend hiding your stuff, as the monkeys have a habit of stealing items. The main Monkey Forest Street in the area also provides many choices in restaurants that offer fare from Western cuisines to local Balinese dishes.

As a person who loves adventure, taking calculated risks and clicking extraordinary pictures, Bali was a delightful experience, fulfilling all three of my goals in one trip.



Hotels in the Heart of Nature



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

There is no better way to relax and unwind than in nature, a retreat to escape and experience its beauty and tranquility in its full magnificence. When it comes to luxury travel, the best hotels in nature provide the perfect retreat, allowing guests to disconnect from daily life and immerse themselves in stunning natural surroundings. Here are some of the world's best hotels in nature and incredible things to do while staying there.

JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, India: Just a few hours away from the Gulf, picturesque mountain views of India's northern Garhwal Himalayan ranges await when you stay at the Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa. Just under 300 kms from the capital New Delhi, the resort is the perfect getaway for guests who want to experience and enjoy the serenity of nature, in the lap of luxury. Offering the epitome of sophistication with a heightened sense of comfort, the indulgent rooms offer panoramic views of the valley, expansive dining options, tastefully appointed meeting spaces and the acclaimed Cedar Spa by L'Occitane. Guests can choose to indulge in ancient healing treatments at the spa before heading out on a raft-

ing adventure on the Rishikesh River, or just relax and take in views of the towering Himalayas from the comfort of your room or suite.

Amangiri, Utah, US: Located in the heart of Utah's Canyon Country, Amangiri is a luxurious retreat that offers guests breathtaking views of the surrounding canyons. With its modern design and stunning infinity pool, Amangiri seamlessly blends in with the natural landscape of mesas, ridges, and gorges. The hotel's modern suites, villas, and tented pavilions are just a stone's throw away from the stunning wilderness of Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park. From canyoneering to excursions by bike, boat, or on horseback, guests are encouraged to discover the region in their unique way including

a hot air balloon ride over the desert landscape. Other unique experiences include learning more about the ecology, geology, and human history of the area as well as the rich traditions of neighboring Native American tribes such as Navajo storytelling.

Soneva Kiri, Thailand: Nestled in the lush tropical rainforests of Koh Kood island, Soneva Kiri offers guests a chance to truly get away from it all. The resort features luxurious villas that are spread throughout the jungle canopy, providing stunning views of the surrounding rainforest. Guests can indulge in spa treatments, take a sunset cruise around the island, or even learn how to cook Thai cuisine from the resort's world-class chefs.



Le Méridien Paro, Bhutan

Le Méridien Paro, Bhutan: Known for promoting its national philosophy of Gross National Happiness, it is no surprise that when you stay at the 59-room Le Méridien Paro, Riverfront, a feeling of beauty-induced bliss is practically built into the equation. Views of the Eastern Himalayas and the soothing sounds of the Paro River are the setting and soundtrack for a truly transporting stay. Just ten minutes from Paro International Airport, the modern hotel is influenced by traditional Bhutanese architecture and offers a relaxed base for exploring Bhutan. The guest rooms and suites at the hotel are sophisticated and elegant with polished wooden paneling and crisp white bedding. Guests staying at the hotel can explore nearby Paro with its monasteries, temples, and markets, hike to the Taktsang Tiger's Nest monastery, or try the traditional sports of darts and archery.

Tambo del Inka Resort & Spa, Valle Sagrado, Peru: Experience the lure of Peru's Sacred Valley with a stay at Tambo del Inka Resort & Spa, in Valle Sagrado. Sip your morning coffee from your room's private balcony with views of the towering Andes Mountains and Urubamba River before heading out to explore the local area to follow the Incan path. Guests can also choose to venture farther afield to Machu Picchu from the property's private train station, where guests can start an unforgettable journey between Urubamba and Machu Picchu. Luxurious 1920s style carriages, including a dining car, a panoramic observation bar car and gourmet cuisine all combine to create an unforgettable experience.

Banyan Tree, Al Ula, Saudi Arabia: This stunning property is situated in the magical surroundings of Al Ula in Saudi Arabia and features an all-villa resort concept located in one of the world's most mysterious travel destinations. Guests have the chance to embark on a multi-sensory experience at Banyan Tree AlUla and be stunned by the stillness and peacefulness of the stunning rock formations. The one-bedroom villas are decorated with authentic, handcrafted Arabian-inspired antiques and feature bathroom patios and an external fire pit. Located in what many call the world's largest living museum, the resort is just a short flight from either Riyadh or Jeddah.

Whether you are looking to explore the stunning natural beauty of the American Southwest or immerse yourself in the lush tropical rainforests of Thailand, these luxury hotels provide the perfect escape. With their world-class amenities and incredible surroundings, these hotels offer guests the chance to truly disconnect and indulge in the beauty of nature.

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, @hello_hermoine



Amangiri, Utah, US



Tambo del Inka Resort & Spa, Valle Sagrado, Peru

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Responsible AI Development



Klaus Schwab and Cathy Li

Klaus Schwab is Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum. Cathy Li is Head of AI, Data and Metaverse and a member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum.

productivity and income growth, expanded access to information and communication technologies, extended human lifespans, and improved overall well-being. On the other hand, they have led to worker displacement, wage stagnation, greater inequality, and increasing concentration of resources among individuals and corporations.

AI is no different. Generative AI systems open up abundant opportunities in areas such as product design, content creation, drug discovery and health care, personalized education, and energy optimization. At the same time, they may prove highly disruptive, and even harmful, to our economies and societies.

For some, this is a reason to tap the brakes on AI research. Last month, more than 1,000 AI technologists, from Elon Musk to Steve Wozniak, signed an open letter recommending that AI labs 'immediately pause' the training of systems more powerful than GPT-4 for at least six months. During this pause, they argue, a set of shared safety protocols — "rigorously audited and overseen by independent outside experts" — should be devised and implemented.

The open letter, and the heated debate it has triggered, underscores the urgent need for stakeholders to engage in a wide-ranging good-faith process aimed at aligning on robust shared guidelines for developing and deploying

Proposals for AI and digital-services governance are already emerging, including in the United States and the European Union. Organizations like the World Economic Forum are also making contributions. In 2021, the Forum launched the Global Coalition for Digital Safety, which aims to unite stakeholders in tackling harmful content online and facilitate the exchange of best practices for regulating online safety.

The Forum subsequently created the Digital Trust Initiative, to ensure that advanced technologies like AI are developed with the public's best interests in mind.

Now, the Forum is calling for urgent public-private cooperation to address the challenges that have accompanied the emergence of generative AI and to build consensus on the next steps for developing and deploying the technology. To facilitate progress, the Forum, in partnership with AI Commons — a nonprofit organization supported by AI practitioners, academia, and NGOs focused on the common good — will hold a global summit on generative AI in San Francisco on April 26-28. Stakeholders will discuss the technology's impact on business, society, and the planet, and work together to devise ways to mitigate negative externalities and deliver safer, more sustainable, and more equitable outcomes.

Generative AI will change the world, whether we like it or not. At this pivotal moment in the technology's development, a cooperative approach is essential to enable us to do everything in our power to ensure that the process is aligned with our shared interests and values.

“Beyond widespread reorientation of labor markets, large-language-model systems can increase the spread of disinformation and perpetuate harmful biases. Generative AI also threatens to exacerbate economic inequality.”

The risks already posed by advanced AI, and those that are reasonably foreseeable, are considerable. Beyond widespread reorientation of labor markets, large-language-model systems can increase the spread of disinformation and perpetuate harmful biases. Generative AI also threatens to exacerbate economic inequality. Such systems may even pose existential risks to humankind.

advanced AI. Such an effort must account for issues like automation and job displacement, the digital divide, and the concentration of control over technological assets and resources, such as data and computing power. And a top priority must be to work continuously to eliminate systemic biases in AI training, so that systems like ChatGPT do not end up reproducing or even exacerbating them.

In recent months, the development of artificial intelligence has accelerated considerably, with generative AI systems such as ChatGPT and Midjourney rapidly transforming a wide range of professional activities and creative processes. The window of opportunity for guiding the development of this powerful technology in ways that minimize the risks and maximize the benefits is closing fast.

AI-based capabilities exist along a continuum, with generative AI systems such as GPT-4 (the latest version of ChatGPT) falling within the most advanced category. Given that such systems hold the greatest promise and can lead to the most treacherous pitfalls, they merit particularly close scrutiny by public and private stakeholders.

Virtually all technological advances have had both positive and negative effects on society. On one hand, they have bolstered economic

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Rethinking Development in an Age of Crisis



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Nowhere is the impact of recent crises — the lingering economic consequences of COVID-19 and the global spillover effects of Russia's war in Ukraine — being felt more acutely than in the developing world. People in poor countries are struggling to cope with higher food and fuel prices and unsustainable debt, while schoolchildren are still suffering from learning loss caused by the pandemic. In many places, economic growth has stalled.

Compounding these challenges, the effects of climate change are becoming even more pronounced, with floods, droughts, and crop failures threatening lives and livelihoods. And as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in its most recent report, the world must act immediately to ward off some of the more catastrophic consequences of global warming, which would hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest.

The global 'polycrisis' poses an unprecedented threat to economic development. Creating a more resilient, sustainable, and prosperous future for all now requires redefining the fundamentals of growth to address new transnational threats. Responsiveness, innovation, international cooperation, and private-sector partnerships matter more than ever. The World Bank, already

the largest provider of finance for climate action in developing countries, is strengthening its operating model to respond rapidly to these changed circumstances.

When assessing low-income countries' prospects, the numbers speak for themselves. In developing economies, growth over the remainder of this decade is projected to be one-third lower than it was in the 2000s. Recent crises have thrown tens of millions of people back into poverty. Instead of meeting the Sustainable Development Goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, the current rate of progress implies that nearly 600 million people will still be living on

including in renewable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure, is also essential. And support for building strong and adaptive public-health, education, and social-welfare systems is needed to mitigate the impact of future crises.

The past three years have demonstrated the importance of scaling up crisis preparedness and improving response times. The World Bank Group has provided a financing package of \$170 billion for the 15 months ending in June 2023 to help countries address the effects of multiple overlapping crises. Critically, this has included support for strengthening social-protection systems and food and nutrition security in some

management.

Challenges that are fundamentally transnational or global in nature, particularly climate change, are driving the biggest shifts in development policy. Besides greater resources, progress will require fostering a knowledge-sharing culture, so that countries can quickly learn from one another and make better decisions under conditions of great uncertainty. Careful planning is also needed to ensure that projects will strengthen long-term resilience and are scalable through private-sector investment.

Tackling global warming may seem daunting, but the recent IPCC report offers some hope. It notes that several mitigation technologies — especially those focused on improved land use and renewable energy — have become cost-effective in recent years. Moreover, policies to accelerate the uptake of these technologies, reduce deforestation, and improve energy efficiency have led to significant reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions in some sectors. With international support, such advances could be a boon for developing countries.

Above all, the new challenges require greater cooperation between countries and increased commitment on the part of the international community. Here, too, there is hope. The world has just experienced a deadly pandemic that could have been even deadlier without cross-border collaboration. Working together, we were able to produce and distribute effective vaccines at record speed. With global shocks showing no signs of abating, and with developing economies bearing the brunt of their impact, this type of shared commitment and united action must become the new normal.

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To reverse the losses of recent years and get developing countries back on track, we need to help governments achieve macroeconomic stability and develop business environments that are conducive to private-sector investment.

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less than \$2.15 a day. The longer-term picture is equally bleak: COVID-related education shocks could cost today's students in low- and middle-income countries up to 10 percent of their future earnings.

To reverse the losses of recent years and get developing countries back on track, we need to help governments achieve macroeconomic stability and develop business environments that are conducive to private-sector investment. Rolling out investment-ready capital projects that will underpin a more sustainable future,

of the world's most vulnerable countries. Since February 2022, the World Bank has mobilized more than \$23 billion in financial support for Ukraine.

Targeted funds also play a crucial role in mitigating future disasters. The World Bank's new Pandemic Fund, for example, will help low- and middle-income countries boost capacity in essential areas like disease surveillance, laboratories, the public-health workforce, and community engagement, as well as emergency communication, coordination, and



Insufficient sleep linked to risk of CVD

Awareness campaigns and repeated recommendations by doctors and other healthcare personnel over the years, have led most people to realize the importance of improving their lifestyles, eating a healthy diet and engaging in regular exercise to lower their risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD). A new study now finds that adequate sleep duration and sleep quality are also essential lifestyle habits that we should incorporate to reduce the risk of CVD and other ailments.

The study, led by researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden and relying on data from several large cohort studies, found a significant link between inadequate sleep and an increased likelihood of developing peripheral artery disease (PAD) — a health condition that arises from a narrowing or blockage of arteries in the legs or lower extremities due to a buildup of fatty plaque, similar to coronary artery disease or atherosclerosis. The research revealed that those who sleep less than five hours per night have a 74 percent higher chance of developing PAD, compared to those who maintain a healthy sleep routine of 7 to 8 hours per night.

The study involved over 650,000 participants and was carried out in two stages. First, the researchers looked at how the amount of sleep people got at night and daytime napping were related to their risk of developing PAD. Next, they used a research

method that examined genetic information to separate true cause-and-effect relationships from mere associations, providing stronger evidence for potential causal links.

In an observational study involving 53,416 adults, sleeping less than five hours a night nearly doubled the risk of PAD compared to sleeping seven to eight hours. Additional analyses with 156,582 and 452,028 individuals supported this finding. In the causal studies, not only was short sleep linked to an increased risk of PAD, but having PAD also increased the likelihood of not getting enough sleep. These results suggest that insufficient nighttime sleep can heighten the risk of developing PAD, and having PAD, in turn, can lead to inadequate sleep.

In the case of long sleep, an observational study of 53,416 adults found that sleeping eight or more hours per night was associated with a 24 percent increased risk of PAD compared to sleeping seven to eight hours. This observation was backed by analyses in two larger groups of individuals as well. However, no cause-and-effect relationship was discovered between long sleep and PAD. The researchers also reported similar findings for daytime napping, where those who napped had a 32 percent higher risk of PAD than non-nappers, but no causal connections were established.

The study is of high value because prior studies exploring this association have been

limited, due to less robust study design and lower statistical power. The implications of the study's findings for patients and the public are also significant. In 2022, the American Heart Association revised its original 'Life's Essential 7' list to include an eight component, namely getting '7-9 hours of quality sleep' as optimal from a cardiovascular perspective.

According to the researchers, doctors and other healthcare professionals need to place a stronger focus on the benefits of relatively simple lifestyle changes that can have a strong positive effect on health and life for patients and the public alike.

On a related note, and adding to the volume of research that now underlines the importance of getting quality sleep of adequate duration to maintain a healthy life, another new study finds that sleep deprivation of 30 to 40 minutes per night affects the health of children, both physically and mentally.

The study found that when children lost between a half hour to 40 minutes of sleep each night for less than a week, they had significantly lower well-being, did not cope as well at school, and had reduced quality of life. The study involved children who were earlier part of the larger DREAM (Daily Rest, Eating, and Activity Monitoring) study. In the new study, the children underwent alternating weeks of restricted sleep and extended sleep. Over a 100 healthy kids with no sleep problems between the ages of 8 and 12 took part in this 2022 study.

The children's bedtimes were altered to be either one hour later than usual (sleep restriction) or one hour earlier (sleep extension). Children still woke up at their normal times. The researchers then asked both parents and children to assess the



children's health-related quality of life using various questionnaires.

The researchers found that sleep loss, even for as little as a week, can decrease both a child and their parents' perceived quality of life in children. The study is particularly significant in that most previous studies involved kids who had sleep disorders. The new study shows a direct connection between sleep restriction and health-related quality of life in healthy children as well. The findings are important as they serve as a wake-up call to parents to ensure their kids get adequate sleep each night by instilling in them regular bedtime patterns.

Among the beneficial suggestions to ensure a good night's sleep are: Switching off all blue light devices, such as smartphones and other electronic display devices half an hour before bedtime. Blue light has been found to send a signal to the brain that it is time to wake up, which leads to difficulty in falling asleep. Send a signal to the brain that it's time to be awake, causing you to have a hard time falling asleep. Adopting and sustaining a consistent bedtime routine, regardless of the time of year or occasion, can also help normalize sleep.

Printed food could soon be a dining option

Future landscape of our kitchens could be vastly different from what we are accustomed to now. If engineers at Columbia University's Creative Machines Lab make further headway on an innovative technology they are currently further developing, conventional cooking appliances such as ovens, stovetops, and microwaves may soon make way for cooking devices that incorporate three-dimensional (3D) printers, lasers or other software-driven processes.

Ever since they first printed edible 3D food in 2005, engineers at the lab have been fine tuning their device to print a vast array



of comestibles, in small batches as proof of principle. Their latest delicacy was a 3D printed cheesecake that used seven edible food inks that included peanut butter, Nutella and strawberry jam. The engineers said their precision printing of multi-layered food items could produce customizable foods, improve food safety, and enable users to control the nutrient content of meals more easily.

However, the technology still has some way to go before it becomes more mainstream. For starters, since 3D food printing is still a nascent technology, it needs an ecosystem of supporting industries such as food cartridge manufacturers, downloadable recipe files, and an environment in which to create and share these recipes.

There are several advantages to foods printed on 3D machines, including in helping

calibrate the exact micro- and macro-nutrients to stay healthy, and improving the ways we nourish ourselves. Its customizability makes it particularly practical for the plant-based meat market, where texture and flavor need to be carefully formulated to mimic real meats.


To demonstrate the potential of 3D food printing, the team tested various cheesecake designs, consisting of seven key ingredients: graham cracker, peanut butter, Nutella, banana puree, strawberry jam, cherry drizzle, and frosting. They found that the most successful design used a graham cracker as the foundational ingredient for each layer of the cake. Peanut butter and Nutella proved to be best used as supporting layers to hold the softer ingredients such as banana and jam.

Multi-ingredient designs evolved into multi-tiered structures that followed similar principles to building architectures; more structural elements were needed to support softer substrates for a successful multi-ingredient layered print.

With growing concern over the enormous problem of processed foods with low-nutrient value harming health, it will take more than a new 'wow' technology to convince people that although 3D printing is a form of processed food, the advantage is that with better control over ingredients, it will enable us to personalize our diet by tailoring the food printed to meet our specific nutritional and dietary requirements to stay healthy. It may also be useful in making food more appealing to those with swallowing disorders by mimicking the shapes of real foods with the pureed texture foods that these patients require.

Laser cooking and 3D food printing could allow chefs to localize flavors and textures on a millimeter scale to create new food experiences. People with dietary restrictions, parents of young children, nursing home dietitians, and athletes alike could find these personalized techniques very useful and convenient in planning meals. And, because the system uses high-energy targeted light for high-resolution tailored heating, cooking could become more cost-effective and more sustainable.

Also, with more emphasis on food safety following the COVID-19 pandemic, food prepared with less human handling could lower the risk of foodborne illness and disease transmission.



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