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Bangladesh celebrates
52nd anniversary of
independence

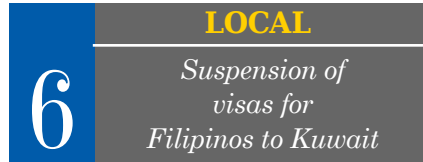
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Four-day working
week gains traction in
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Lethal Price of Sweatshop

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

It has been ten years since an eight-story commercial building housing several textile factories on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, collapsed on 24 April, 2013. The collapse of Rana Plaza claimed the lives of 1,134 people and severely injured 2,000 more, most of them women.

It was the deadliest industrial disaster since the 1984 gas leak that killed more than 3,000 people in Bhopal, India, and the worst accident in the modern history of the textile industry. Thousands of workers were trapped beneath the rubble for several days, with many succumbing to hunger and dehydration while others resorted to drinking their own urine to survive.

The deaths were predictable and preventable. The building was constructed atop a filled-in pond using substandard materials, rendering it unable to support the weight of heavy machinery. The upper four floors were added illegally, further exacerbating its structural issues. Cracks in the building's walls



were seen in the days before the collapse, leading to the evacuation of some floors. But

the building's owner, Sohel Rana, insisted on business as usual. Under pressure from buyers

to meet delivery targets, Rana threatened to withhold workers' wages (roughly \$38 per month) if they failed to report to work. For those who did, his building proved to be a death trap, collapsing in under 90 seconds. It is tempting to dismiss the Rana Plaza disaster as just another example of the challenges, including corrupt governments and unregulated businesses, facing the developing world. But developed Western countries were just as complicit. The wreckage was littered with the labels of some of the world's top retailers and fashion brands. Benetton, Monsoon, Mango, Walmart, and Primark were among the 29 large retailers identified as having sourced inventory from the building's garment factories.

The fact is that sweatshops like Rana Plaza would not exist if the dynamics of international trade did not fuel a desperate race to the bottom as developing countries compete for foreign direct investment from multinational corporations. In Bangladesh, the lack of regulation has enabled low wages and exploitative working conditions that are comparable to modern slavery.

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EU underscores strong partnership with Kuwait



During the celebration on the occasion of Europe Day 2023, the Chargé d'affaires of the European Union Mission in Kuwait, Gediminas Vranavichis, emphasized the close partnership between Kuwait and the European Union (EU).

The event, held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on 9 May, was attended by Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for European Affairs Ambassador Sadeq Marafi, European Union Ambassadors, Kuwaiti dignitaries and high-ranking officials,

Pointing out that Kuwait was the first country in the Gulf region to sign a cooperation agreement with the European Union's External Action Department in 2016, Mr. Vranavichis said this demonstrated the strong relations between the

two sides. He expressed his pride in the achievements made since the opening of the European Union mission in Kuwait in 2019.

He noted that in May last year, the 'Strategic partnership with the Gulf' was announced, aiming to expand and deepen cooperation between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. This partnership serves as a roadmap for enhancing ties in various areas such as economy, digitization, energy, security, humanitarian aid, human rights, and institutional cooperation. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of a partnership in the green transition of the energy sector and the fight against climate change.

Regarding climate change, Mr. Vranavichis acknowledged its urgency and cited a recent opinion poll revealing that more than half of Kuwaitis believe further action is necessary to combat climate change. He highlighted the EU's leading role in global climate action and its substantial financial and human resources dedicated to addressing this ongoing crisis.

Youth empowerment, which focuses on enhancing the skills and capabilities of younger generations, was also a priority for the EU, said Mr. Vranavichis. He added that the Erasmus higher education program, which provides opportunities for Kuwaiti students to study in European Union countries, was an example of the European Union's dedication to youth development.

He also pointed out that several European countries have been participating in the joint maritime security mission called the European Maritime Monitoring Mission in the Strait of Hormuz since 2020. This mission ensures safe maritime navigation for ships, including those departing from and arriving at Kuwaiti ports.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, he expressed gratitude for Kuwait's unwavering support for the UN Charter. Kuwait co-sponsored an emergency UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March 2022, along with 141 countries, including all member states of the European Union.

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Kuwait-based Leading Digital Solutions Provider KEMS-Zajil Telecom Awarded With Global ISO & PCI DSS Certifications

Kuwait-based Leading Digital Solutions Provider KEMS-Zajil Telecom Awarded With Global ISO & PCI DSS Certifications

KEMS-Zajil Telecom, Kuwait's leading Digital Solutions Provider today announced that it has obtained the global ISO certifications for Information Security Management System (ISO 27001: 2013), Effective Environmental Management System (ISO 14001: 2015), Occupational Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001:2018), Information Technology Services Management (ISO 20000-1:2018), ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22301:2019 and PCI DSS to keep in pace with international standards for the provision of telecommunications services.

These certifications are global standards for information security, occupational safety and proof of efficiency of telecommunications companies, which makes KEMS-Zajil Telecom one of the most accredited telecom providers in the Gulf region that follows international security and quality standards in building, operating, managing and protecting networks and in providing telecommunications and technology services information for customers.

On the company's success in obtaining ISO and PCI DSS certifications, "Mr. Nezar Mohamed Al Saie, Chairman of the Board of Directors of KEMS-Zajil Telecom, stated; "This achievement is affirmation of the continuous efforts made by KEMS-Zajil Telecom to enhance its technology, transform its security infrastructure, prove its commitment to protecting customer data and implementing security controls so the customers and partners have a smooth experience in confronting cybersecurity risks.

In addition, he added: "Information Security is a continuous process, and KEMS-Zajil Telecom is committed to constantly developing it to reassure its customers full commitment to the security of its internal systems and customer information, in order to provide distinguished services and solutions that are more valuable and more beneficial in the information security."

KEMS-Zajil Telecom currently positioned in the market as a Digital Solutions Provider offers a wide portfolio of Enterprise focused cutting edge technology solutions like Connectivity, Voice & Communication, Cloud, Managed Networks, Cybersecurity, ICT, Datacenter, IoT & Big Data and these international certifications adds more credibility and competency to the company.

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Bangladesh celebrates 52nd anniversary of independence



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

As part of celebration to mark the 52nd anniversary of Independence and National Day on 26 March, the Bangladesh Embassy hosted a grand reception at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on 11 May. A large gathering of ambassadors, high-ranking officials and dignitaries, as well as officers from the Bangladesh Military Contingent in Kuwait and members of the Bangladesh community attended the event.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, as the chief guest for the evening was welcomed by Bangladesh Ambassador H.E. Major General Md. Ashikuzzaman, ndc,afwc,psc, and his spouse Nahid Niaz Shilu and other officers of the embassy and their spouses.

In his address on the occasion, Ambassador Ashikuzzaman stated that the Independence of Bangladesh was achieved through a long political struggle that lasted for 23 years and ended with the War of Independence in 1971. "The war started on 26 March 1971 and after 9 months we achieved our glorious victory on 16 December 1971. This year we are celebrating 52nd anniversary of our Independence and National Day

"On this occasion, I remember with profound respect the architect of our independent Bangladesh, Father of our Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose firm and far-sighted leadership, we became an independent nation. I also pay deep homage to the freedom fighters, three million martyrs, and two hundred thousand women who made their supreme sacrifices during our Liberation War.

"We are grateful to all the friendly countries, organizations, institutions, and individuals for their generous support during our Liberation War. Our special gratitude is to our time-tested friend India for their moral and physical support. Our deep homage to those brave Indian soldiers who also made supreme sacrifices during our Liberation War. All of their contributions to the history of our Independence are written in golden letters forever.

"Today, under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has graduated from Least Developing Country to Developing Country. We express our sincere thanks and gratefulness to all the countries across the globe for their various support during our journey of the last 52 years.

"I would also like to recall the deep and historic



tie of friendship and brotherhood between Bangladesh and the State of Kuwait. The people of Bangladesh will remain ever grateful to Kuwait, as Kuwait was the first Gulf country to recognize Bangladesh after its independence. On this occasion, I express my deep gratitude to the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of the State of Kuwait for their continued support toward us and our nationals living in Kuwait.

'Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974, Bangladesh and Kuwait are enjoying excellent bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas including political, economic, export and import, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, tourism and defense sector. The Government of Bangladesh is committed to further strengthening bilateral cooperation with Kuwait in every domain. Both countries have also vowed to identify new areas of mutual cooperation such as food security, health security, climate change, renewable energy, green technology, ICT and digitalization among others. We will be celebrating the golden

jubilee of our diplomatic relations in 2024.

"The military cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait is very special. Being a part of Coalition Forces, after the Liberation of Kuwait, from 1991 till to date, the Bangladesh Military Contingent (BMC) have been working here under Kuwait Armed Forces on a project named Operation Kuwait Punargathan (OKP). At present around 5,000 Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel are deployed with Kuwait Armed Forces. Our achievements in the international arena, including the establishment of world peace, is also commendable. We are happy to inform you that Bangladesh has been the largest troop-contributing country in the world under the Blue Helmet initiative in the United Nations Peacekeeping mission since 2020.

"Despite being a densely populated country, Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity by sheltering millions of Rohingyas, the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals in Bangladesh. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem. We are thankful to Kuwait and UNHCR Kuwait and other organizations for their continued support in this humanitarian issue. We call upon the United Nations and the international community, including Myanmar, to take early and effective measures for a permanent solution to this problem and return all to their home land

Myanmar with dignity, safety and security.

"Bangladesh is the second largest economy in South Asia. According to a report published in December 2021, the UK based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) said that if the current economic progress continues, Bangladesh would become the 24th largest economy in the world by 2036. According to Vision 2041 of Bangladesh, we want to become a developed nation and a 'smart nation' in the world. We call it 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bengal'. Building Smart Bangladesh by 2041, will be achieved by establishing Smart Citizen, Smart Economy, Smart Society, and Smart Government.

"To materialize our dream, the government has established 100 Special Economic Zones to attract the potential investors. The main objectives of this initiative is to act as a change agent for faster economic growth by creating an investment friendly environment and attracting foreign direct investment. Besides local and international investors in different categories, so far, Bangladesh has reserved two economic zones for India and one economic zone for Japan and one economic zone for China on G2G Basis.

"In Bangladesh, major potential sectors of investment are garments and textiles, pharmaceuticals, ship building, light engineering, ceramic, leather, agri-business and ICT. To facilitate the investment environment, the government has also undertaken a number of mega projects to improve or develop the communications network both internally, regionally and globally. On behalf of the government of Bangladesh, I invite Kuwait and all the friendly countries of the world to invest in economic zones and share benefits of mutual growth and prosperity.

"Bangladesh is a land of natural beauty. Each part of the country offers distinctly different topography, flavors and food. Bangladesh offers the world's longest natural sea beach at Cox's Bazar and world's largest mangrove forest - Sundarban, the home of Royal Bengal Tigers. I welcome you all to visit Bangladesh and enjoy the beauty and hospitality of Bangladeshi People.

'Before I conclude, I thank all my embassy colleagues for making this event a successful one. I thank all the Bangladeshi living in Kuwait for their continuous support for our motherland. I also call upon all my Bangladeshi to contribute to their maximum in making Bangladesh 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by our Father of the Nation. With the joint efforts of all, may our beloved motherland become a developed country free from hunger and poverty — this is my expectation on this 52nd anniversary of Independence and National Day."



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Korean Embassy co-hosts Kuwait Taekwondo Spectacle 2023

Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation co-hosted the 'Kuwait Taekwondo Spectacle 2023' on 11 May at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Hall Complex, under the patronage of the Kuwait Korean Community Association and the Kukkiwon (the World Taekwondo Headquarters) in Korea.

Taekwondo is one of the most systematic and scientific Korean traditional martial arts that has been developing with the 5000-year-long history of Korea. It is a kind of discipline that shows ways of

enhancing our spirit and life through training our body and mind more than physical fighting skills.

Today, it has become a global sport with 150 million practitioners worldwide and has been among the official Olympics Games events since the Sydney Olympics in 2000. It also holds special meaning for Kuwait since it brought the first Olympic medal to Kuwait in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, even though it was a demonstration sport then.

A closer look at the meaning of the word 'Taekwondo' in Korean language shows us that

the first syllable 'Tae' means 'foot' and 'step on', 'Kwon' means 'fists' and 'fight', and 'Do' means the 'way' or 'discipline'. So the translation of Tae Kwon Do is 'the right way of using parts of the body to help build a better and more peaceful world'.

This year's Taekwondo event was bigger and better than ever, with several exciting programs. One of the highlights of the event was a Kukkiwon Taekwondo demonstration by the world-best Taekwondo masters' demonstration team. The Kukkiwon's demonstration provided

a unique opportunity to witness the beauty and grace of Taekwondo, as well as the awe-inspiring display of speed, power, and precision, which left spectators spellbound.

Another highlight was the Korean Ambassador's Cup Championship, which featured some of the best Taekwondo athletes in Kuwait. The Korean Ambassador's Cup Championship aims to promote the sport of Taekwondo in Kuwait and provides a platform for the country's Taekwondo practitioners to compete and enjoy victory.



LuLu Hypermarket Launches Exciting Summer Fashion Promotion

Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait, one of the leading retail chains in the country, has launched its Summer Fashion promotion, featuring discounted garments and footwear from top fashion brands. The promotion, which will run from May 6th to May 16th, 2023, is available at all Lulu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait, both online and offline.

The promotion was launched on May 6th, 2023, at the Lulu Hypermarket Alrai outlet, in the presence of major fashionistas from the town. The launch event also featured a kids' fashion show with a summer theme, with over 100 kids participating. All participants received consolation prizes, while the first, second, and third prize winners received valuable gift prizes.

Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait is proud to partner with own top fashion brands, including Debacker, Eten, Marco Doneitelli, Cortigiani, and Tom Smith, to offer customers a wide range of summer garments and footwear. The promotion offers customers the chance to purchase high-quality fashion items at discounted prices, making it the perfect opportunity to update their summer wardrobe.

The promotion also featured fashionistas who provided customers with trial demos of summer garments, as well as tips and advice on how to style them. Fashion vloggers were also present to explain Lulu Hypermarket's latest trends and fashions to customers, which they shared on their social media platforms.



Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait is committed to providing its customers with the best possible shopping experience, and the Summer Fashion promotion is a testament to that commitment. Customers can take advantage of the exciting offers and discounts, both in-store and online, to make the most of the summer fashion season.



DDI organizes awareness initiative at Canadian Embassy

Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) recently organized a diabetes awareness outreach initiative at the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait, in the presence of the Canadian Ambassador, H.E. Aliya Mawani.

Elaborating on the initiative, Director of Public Relations and Media Services at DDI, Tarek Aleryan stated that the Institute participated with its mobile clinic, which is a new medically equipped bus to conduct basic and preventive medical testing such as blood glucose, pressure, and vital signs, in addition to many other tests. He added that the Institute believes in the importance

of conducting early checks and spreading awareness on diabetes so as to contribute to the prevention of this disease and its complications. In addition, booklets, leaflets, flyers, and other material on educational topics such as the healthy plate, intermittent fasting, how to prevent diabetes, insulin doses and several other subjects were distributed to the embassy staff.

Aleryan added, "The Institute spares no effort in spreading awareness among all segments of society, noting the importance of the role played by the Institute through these awareness initiatives".



MoI warns of audio phishing scam

Ministry of Interior (MoI) has warned citizens and residents about 'voice phishing', a new type of fraud, after reports of several people falling victim to scams.

According to the ministry, voice phishing, or 'vishing' as it is often being called, involves scammers using fraudulent phone calls to trick people into giving money or revealing personal information. It is similar to the 'telephone scams' of the past. Vishing frequently involves a criminal pretending to represent a trusted institution, such as a bank, government entity, or well-known private company.

The scammers may ask you to buy an extended warranty, or you might be told

about winning a prize, offered a "free" gift, or told your computer is infected and needs antivirus software, or asked to donate to charity. You will then be asked to provide your bank account details or government ID card number, or to reveal other personal financial details.

The ministry urged the public to be cautious and to never provide personal information over the phone, especially if they did not initiate the call themselves. They also advised people to report any suspicious calls or messages to the authorities.

The warning comes amid a rise in online scams and cybercrime in Kuwait and around the world, as more people conduct their business and personal activities online. Authorities have been working to raise awareness about the dangers of such scams and to educate the public on how to protect themselves from fraud and identity theft.

Four-day working week gains traction in private sector

Several companies in the private sector are exploring the option of a four-day working-week, as it becomes evident that the shortened week results in positive economic benefits to companies and provides psychological and social advantages to workers.

Reducing working days to four per week is gaining popularity in many countries around the world, as companies seek to improve work-life balance and increase employee satisfaction. A technology firm in Kuwait that recently reduced work days, said it increased.

Employee productivity and motivation. The firm also reported lower absenteeism rates and less stress among employees. Similarly, a marketing agency reported that the new working arrangement helped employees balance their personal and professional lives better. The agency also reported that the move led to better communication and collaboration among team members.

Several companies have stated that the four-day work week has also helped them attract and retain talent, as it is seen as a desirable benefit by potential employees.

The Kuwaiti government has been encouraging companies to explore this approach as part of its efforts to modernize the country's labor laws and promote work-life balance. The trend towards reduced working days is likely to continue, as more companies recognize the benefits of this approach.



Lulu Hypermarket Honors Nurses on International Nurses Day with Exclusive Discounts and Gifts

Lulu Kuwait, a leading retail chain in Kuwait, has recently announced that it successfully honored the invaluable contribution of nurses to the healthcare sector on International Nurses Day, May 12th, 2023. As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, Lulu Hypermarket offered a range of exciting discounts and gifts to nurses across the country as a token of appreciation for their unwavering commitment to patient care.

To show recognition for the tireless efforts of nurses, Lulu Kuwait announced a 25% discount on all garments and footwear, in addition to free gift hampers for all nurses who showed their work ID card. These offers were exclusively available to nurses at any Lulu Hypermarket outlet in Kuwait on May 12th and 13th.

Lulu hypermarket took pride in supporting the nursing community by allocating a special checkout counter exclusively for nurses during the two-day promotion period. The company believed that nurses play a vital role in the healthcare sector, and it hoped that these initiatives served as a fitting tribute to their efforts.

Lulu Kuwait is committed to recognizing the contribution of healthcare professionals and has always been supportive of the healthcare sector. The company invited all nurses in Kuwait to visit their nearest Lulu Hypermarket outlet on May 12th and 13th to take advantage of these exclusive offers.

The discounts and gifts offered by Lulu Kuwait aimed to bring a smile to the faces of nurses across the country and serve as a small token of appreciation for their dedication and hard work. The company thanks all the nurses for their unwavering commitment to patient care and looks forward to supporting the nursing community in the future.

Overall, Lulu Kuwait's efforts to honor nurses on International Nurses Day demonstrated the company's commitment to social responsibility and the healthcare sector.

MoH to impose new fees on medical services for expatriates

A new decision issued last week by the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi, is set to impose additional fees on some health services offered by government hospitals and clinics for expatriates registered in the health insurance system.

The new fees are applicable to laboratory tests that are carried out in the 37 laboratories of the Blood Transfusion Services Department of the Ministry of Health (MoH). In addition, a service fee is to be charged for dispensing blood bags and its derivatives, at KD20 for each bag used by residents, and KD40 for expat visitors.

The decision also set the fees for blood bag exchange services at 20 dinars per bag for the resident and 40 dinars for the visitor. The decision exempts the patient from blood bag fees if there is a donor for each blood bag or its derivatives. The patient is exempted from the specified fees if there is a donor for each blood bag or its derivatives.

The ministry also stated that the fees do not include Kuwaiti



patients, emergency or critical cases, cancer cases, children of non-Kuwaiti patients, or other humanitarian cases, and are limited to specific categories such as patients of non-emergency and pre-scheduled operations for non-citizens. The ministry added that this was within the framework preserving the national strategic stock of blood and its derivatives.

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Suspension of visas for Filipinos to Kuwait

Ministry of Interior is said to have decided to suspend the issuance of new visas to Filipino workers and banned the entry of workers from the Philippines other than those who hold residence visas. Even those issued new and previously issued entry visas will be barred from

entry. However, Filipino workers residing in Kuwait can renew their residence as usual, in line with regular procedures.

The directive to suspend visas for Filipino workers and ban entry of new visa holders, reportedly came from First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister

of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, in his capacity as supervisor of the Public Authority for Manpower, due to Manila's non-compliance with the bilateral agreement signed with Kuwait regarding employment.

For its part, the government of the Philippines announced that it had not received an official notification from Kuwait regarding the suspension of visas for Filipino workers. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti-Filipino joint committee on the issue of domestic workers will be held in Kuwait as scheduled earlier over a period of three days from 16 to 18 May. The meeting is expected to discuss several issues, foremost of which is the possibility of reaching a solution to the issue of domestic workers in accordance with the bilateral agreements signed by the

two countries.

In a related development, Director of Kuwait Airport Passports Department, Brigadier Bader Al-Shaya, has issued a circular to the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stating that "With effect from 10 May, 2023, it is forbidden to allow entry of any passenger of the Filipino nationality even if he/she has a valid entry visa, and that only those who have a valid residence permit in the

country are to be allowed entry.

Accordingly, the Director of Operations Department at the General Administration of Civil Aviation, Mansour Al-Hashemi, has issued a similar circular to the Chairman of the Airline Companies Committee, to inform all airlines operating in Kuwait about banning the boarding of Filipino nationals, except for those holding valid residence permits, on flights headed for Kuwait.



International Nurses' Day celebrated at Joyalukkas Jewellery, Kuwait



On the occasion of International Nurses' Day on 12th May 2023, Joyalukkas Jewellery organized an event to honor the nursing professional of Kuwait, under the leadership of Mr. Vinodkumar, The Regional Manager, Joyalukkas Jewellery, Kuwait. The prominent Nursing professionals from different areas of Kuwait were the guests of honor. The colorful event was graced by the presence of Rev. Fr. Davis Chiramel, Chairman, Kidney Federation of India.

Fr. Davis Chiramel, emphasized the care and courage of nurses in his message to the vast audience gathered in the specially arranged stage at Lulu Hypermarket Dajeej. He said "Nursing professionals became part of our life and they help us from the cradle till the coffin. As the family members, they love from their hearts and their knowledge and experience leads them to be more kind to the patients and their role in the society became more relevant during the Covid-19 and made them soldiers."

This special recognition to the representatives of nursing

community in Kuwait conducted by Joyalukkas in association with Lulu Hypermarket, Dajeej. Management of Joyalukkas expressed the gratitude to the nurses for their contributions to the community and honored them among the public. "Care is the Real Gold" was the tagline of the event and Mr. Vinodkumar, Regional Manager, Joyalukkas Jewellery commented on the noticeable services of the Nurses and he assured to continue such events in future as the part of social commitment of the Joyalukkas Jewellery.

Honored 15 Nursing professionals, such as Asst. Nursing Directors, Head Nurses, Clinical Instructors, Nurses etc. from different areas and nationalities who works with many years of experience. Joyalukkas honored them with the Memento and gifts. All shared their visions, dreams and happiness as the Nurse during their speeches. And they expressed sincere gratitude to Joyalukkas for making such an event to recognize their profession among the community.



Thought
for the
week

Learn as if you will
live forever, live like you
will die tomorrow.

— Mahatma Gandhi

RECIPE

Frozen treat for sizzling heat



Although anytime is ice cream time, the period when we really relish this frozen treat is in the heat of summer. With temperatures rising daily as we head towards the sizzling months, now would be a good time to prepare and stock up the freezer with different flavors of cool and creamy home-made ice creams.

If you are in the mood to try a totally different flavor from the traditional fare of vanilla, chocolate or strawberry ice cream, then this coconut-pineapple-yogurt ice cream is the right choice. In addition, making it at home, without any of the preservatives, added sugars, or colorings thrown in, makes this ice cream a healthier choice as well.

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Freezing time: 4-5 hours

Serving: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup hung curd (yogurt with the whey strained out)
- 1 cup condensed milk
- 1/2 tsp coconut flakes
- 1/4 cup crushed pineapple (fresh or canned)

Instructions:

- Combine the yogurt, coconut milk, and condensed milk in a blender and blend well
- Add the crushed pineapple, folding it into the yogurt mix
- Transfer it to an airtight freezer-safe container and freeze for a minimum of 4 to 5 hours, although overnight is best.
- Serve with optional toasted coconut flakes and pineapple slices or cookie crumbs.
- The ice cream can be stored in the freezer for up to a month.



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



British Embassy celebrates the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

On Saturday 6 May, the British Embassy Kuwait hosted a spectacular evening Reception to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The Reception was attended by many dignitaries, including Guest of Honour His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Amiri Diwan Affairs. The British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, emphasised the excellent and historic ties between the UK's Royal and Kuwait's Ruling Families in her remarks. These were evident earlier in the day when His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, attended the Coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

Ambassador Lewis also noted that the celebrations of His Majesty The King's Coronation reflected a more modern face of Britain and involved a greater diversity of participation. She added that the scale of public interest in Kuwait about the Coronation reflected the strong cultural links between the UK and Kuwait, and expressed her confidence that this bilateral friendship will continue to develop and grow even



stronger in the future. His Excellency the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defence, Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah, gave the following statement commending the Reception's success:

"I would like to express my sincerest regards and appreciation to the Ambassador of the UK, H.E. Belinda Lewis, for giving us the opportunity to participate in today's ceremony. It is both an

honor and a privilege to be here with you all tonight to celebrate and participate in His Majesty King Charles III's coronation ceremony.

On the occasion of this historic event that we are witnessing today, I would like to convey the sincerest congratulations and blessings of His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and acting Minister of Defense, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and all Ministry of Defense affiliated organizations, to the UK leadership and people. Also, I would like to take the opportunity to recall the UK's special status for Kuwait's leadership and people.

Emphasis on the pioneering role of His

Majesty King Charles III in consolidating the historical and distinguished bilateral relations since the establishment of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement of 1899, which spanned nearly 124 years between the UK and Kuwait. In 1991, the UK underlined this historical friendship as a vocal member of the international coalition during the liberation of Kuwait. Remembering that the blood of British soldiers was mixed with Kuwaiti blood on the soil of Kuwait, which remains a testament to the profoundness and stability of the bilateral relationship, as it was and will remain a unique model between countries."



'Street Party' marks coronation of British monarch

As part of celebrations marking the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, the British Embassy hosted over 300 guests for a fun-filled 'Street Party' on the evening of 7 May. The Embassy's Street Party was one of three events it organized to celebrate the coronation, following a live screening of the coronation and a VIP evening reception a day earlier.

The 'Street Party' is a British tradition that became popular in 1919 when the country celebrated the signing of the Treaty of Versailles after the end of World War I. Roads



around cities, towns and villages were closed to allow communities, and especially children, to sit down at long tables in the streets to share food and celebrate Peace Day. Over time, it has become a staple of national festivities, including Royal occasions such as Jubilees and Coronations.

The British Embassy Street Party ran in parallel with many thousands of similar celebrations in the UK across the coronation week-end. The party was a diverse affair, attended by people from different nationalities and backgrounds who had won tickets in a competition on the embassy's social media sites.

Guests were treated to famously British food, such as fish and chips, scones and the 'Coronation Quiche', approved by His Majesty The King himself. They also enjoyed activities and entertainment, including face painting, a raffle and live music courtesy of both a UK Royal Air Force band and local musicians, in an inclusive and family-friendly environment.

Commenting on the party, the British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis said: "My team and I were delighted to host our very own Street Party. This was a fitting close to a packed couple of days' worth of events celebrating the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. It was wonderful to bring this British tradition to Kuwait and to celebrate a new chapter in the UK's history."

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Indian Embassy organizes India-Kuwait Investment Conference



Embassy of India in association with Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC), and with the support of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Union of Investment Companies (UIC), organized an investment conference on 8 May at the Hotel Four Seasons, Kuwait City.

High ranking officials from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Invest India, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) participated in the Investment conference. During the conference, representatives from Invest India (National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency) provided an elaborate presentation highlighting the emergence of India as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, and making it an attractive destination for businesses and investors alike.

With a view to attract higher levels of FDI, and to ensure that India remains an increasingly attractive investment destination, the Indian government has in recent years put in place a liberal policy on FDI. Under the new policy, FDI up to 100 percent is permitted under the automatic route in most sectors/activities. Also, in 2021, the government launched the National Single Window System (NSWS), as the online single point interface for investors to start any industry in India and gain related approvals and services. The NSWS provides 'end to end' facilitation and support to investors, including pre-investment advisory, information related to land banks, and facilitates clearances at Centre and State level.

In his address on the occasion, Ambassador of India, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika highlighted the significant opportunities for investment from Kuwait into India, which, he said, could further strengthen the existing cordial relations and strong connections between the two countries. He emphasized the importance of exploring the

potential for trade diversification and investment cooperation between India, the fastest-growing major global economy and Kuwait, the country that aims to achieve its Vision 2035 goals.

Under Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Kuwait, Mohammad Aneizi, representing the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Muhammad Othman Muhammad Al-Aiban, as the Chief Guest, gave the keynote address at the Investment conference.

Also addressing the gathering were the Managing Director, Kuwait Investment Authority, Ghanem Al-Ghenaiman, Chairman, Union of Investment Companies (UIC) Saleh Saleh Al-Selmi, and Board Member of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Diraar AlGhanem. The seminar also saw the sharing of very positive investment experiences in India by the CEO of Asiya Investments, Dari Al Bader, in the Indian hospitality sector, and Head of Corporate Communications, Alghanim Industries, Abdul Lateef Al Sharikh, on their Kirby industries manufacturing plants in India.

The inaugural session was followed by a panel discussion between eminent speakers from the Indian side as well as the Kuwaiti side on unlocking the full potential of India-Kuwait Investment opportunities. Among the Indian economic sectors identified as lucrative for investments from Kuwait were infrastructure, including logistics, real estate, renewable energy, new-age technology including edtech, space technology. On the trade front, among the major exports from India to Kuwait are traditional import items such as cereals, chemicals, ceramic products, electrical machinery that have a strong market in Kuwait, as well as new items that contribute to Kuwait's food security.

There was general consensus among attendees at the conference that India's emergence as a rising economy is a testament to its resilience, in-

novation, and entrepreneurial spirit. The country has made significant strides in recent years, driven by its strong domestic market, skilled workforce, and pro-business policies. With a vibrant startup ecosystem, growing middle class, and increasing digital adoption, India stands poised to unlock its full potential as a global economic powerhouse.

As India continues to leverage its strengths and address its challenges, it is likely to play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of the global economy. Some of the macroeconomic indicators that justify the strong positioning of India as a rising global economy and a lucrative investment destination include:

- India is currently the fifth largest economy in the world after the United States, China, Japan and Germany, with a US\$3.5 trillion economy that aims to be a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.
- India is the fastest growing large economy with a growth rate of 7 percent for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23.
- The country received the highest inflow of global FDI at nearly \$85 billion in FY 2021-22.
- India has jumped 79 positions in rank over the past five years, in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking and has been featured in top-three improvers list consecutively for three years. The country is also among the top-five economies for ease of starting new business.
- India is among the most open economies with 100 percent FDI allowed in most sectors, with only the defense, satellites, pharmaceuticals, transport services and banking requiring government approval.
- FDI Equity inflow in the manufacturing sector increased by 76 percent to \$21 billion in FY 2021-22.

- India reported its highest-ever exports in FY 2022-23 with a value of \$770 billion, an increase of nearly 14 percent from the previous fiscal.
- India officially overtook China to become the most populous nation in the world with 1.43 billion people in 2023. With a median working age of 28 years, the country has the world's second largest working population at more than 520 million, which is more than the combined total population of all 27 European Union countries.

Recent policy reforms have led to the country having one of the lowest corporate taxes among large economies globally. While the new corporate income tax rates for existing companies in India are lower than Brazil (34%), Germany (30%), and are similar to those in China and South Korea at 25 percent, the reformed effective tax rate for new manufacturing companies in India is 17.2 percent, which is close to that of Singapore (17%).

India has the world's third largest start-up ecosystem, and accounts for one in ten of unicorn businesses worldwide with a total of 107 unicorns having a cumulative valuation of over \$340 billion. On the digital payment side, in the nine month period from April to December 2022 a total of 92 billion digital transactions worth a total of \$25 trillion were conducted. And, with 1.2 billion subscribers, India has the second largest number of mobile phone users in the world.

This high-visibility investment conference was well-attended by around 200 eminent people from all major business houses of Kuwait, investment companies, senior government officials, media as well as members of the Indian business and professional community. Given the current investment ecosystem in India, investors from Kuwait could find the country to be an ideal investment opportunity.



Expats sent home 5.4 billion dinars during 2022, a decrease of 2.17 percent

Kuwaitis have reportedly spent huge sums of money on travel during the past year and is considered the highest since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, since the total spending during the first quarter of last year was 1.13 billion dinars, and in the second quarter 835.8 million dinars, and in the third quarter 1.1 billion dinars and in the fourth quarter it was 935 million dinars.

In terms of spending by tourists inside Kuwait, it saw an increase, as their total spending reached 333 million dinars during 2022, reports Al-Anba daily. In terms of imports, Kuwait imported goods worth 8.6 billion dinars in 2022, compared to 8.4 billion in the previous year. 19.3 billion dinars current account surplus during 2022, compared to 10.5 billion dinars in 2021.

Kuwaitis have reportedly spent 4 billion dinars on travel in 2022, a jump of 69.5% bringing their total spending to more than 4 billion dinars, compared to an expenditure of 2.36 billion dinars, according to the preliminary data of Kuwait's balance of payments for the past year issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

The expenditure hiked after the Kuwait International Airport became fully operational and the resumption of summer flights, nearly two years after the closure of the Airport and the tightening of travel procedures to prevent the spread of the Corona epidemic.

On the other hand, the Central Bank data showed that expatriates' remittances during 2022 reached 5.4 billion dinars, declining by about 2.17% compared to 2021, which was 5.5 billion dinars.

The balance of payments showed that commodity exports by Kuwait during the past year witnessed an increase of 49%, or the equivalent of 10 billion dinars, to reach 30.7 billion dinars, of which 28.8 billion dinars were oil exports, com-



pared to commodity exports that amounted to 20.6 billion dinars, of which 19 billion dinars were oil exports. The significant increase in the value of Kuwait's merchandise exports came in conjunction with the increase in the value of the country's oil exports by about 51.1%, or the equivalent of 9.7 billion dinars, as a result of the rise in oil prices, which recorded their highest lev-

els ever during the past year.

In terms of the country's imports of goods, their value was 8.6 billion dinars during the past year, compared to 8.4 billion dinars during 2021, with an increase of 3.3%, or the equivalent of 280 million dinars.

The preliminary CBK data of the balance of payments for t2022, as well as the amended data for 2021, showed that the current account (which shows a summary of receipts and payments between the local economy and other economies with regard to transactions of goods, services, and income) recorded a surplus during 2022.

This increase is mainly due to the increase in the value of commodity exports by about 10 billion dinars, or by 48.5 percent.

The services account (which reflects the net value of service transactions between residents and non-residents, and includes transportation services, travel, communications, construction, and other services, in addition to government

services and goods) recorded a deficit of about 5.1 billion dinars during 2022, compared to a deficit of about 3.7 billion dinars over the previous year (ie an increase of about 1.4 billion dinars, or 38.9%). This increase in the value of the deficit comes mainly from the increase in foreign flows in the travel item during the year 2022.

With regard to the developments of the financial account (which records exchange transactions of financial assets and liabilities between residents and non-residents in the local economy) of Kuwait's balance of payments, preliminary statistics indicate that there is a net financial outflow (an increase in the net value of investments abroad by residents in the local economy) during 2022.

As a result of developments in the main accounts of the balance, the overall position of Kuwait's balance of payments during 2022 recorded a surplus of about 1.1 billion dinars, compared to a deficit of about 970.7 million dinars during the previous year.

Increase in demand for visas to Spain

Ambassador of Spain H.E. Miguel Moro Aguilar, averred that 7,200 visas were issued in Kuwait to visit Spain from the beginning of the year until the end of April. He added that the consular section of the embassy usually issues around 25,000 visas annually, and that the figures for the first four months of the year confirms the increasing demand by Kuwaitis and residents in Kuwait to travel to Spain.

The Spanish ambassador indicated tens of thousands of Kuwaitis visit Spain every year, and some of them own real estate, especially



in the south of the country, which he said had received in the past few years nearly 90 million people, which made Spain the second country

in the world in terms of numbers of tourists.

The ambassador noted with pleasure that many young people in Kuwait are learning the Spanish language, and added, "We want to encourage more people to start learning Spanish, as this will be a very important investment in the relations between our two countries."

He also revealed that two artists from Spain, one playing the guitar and the other the violin would perform at the Kuwait National Library, on 14 May, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture Arts and Letters.

Thakkara Dajeej relaunches T Grill Restaurant




Thakkara Dajeej, a renowned restaurant in the city, recently relaunched its T Grill Restaurant, that features Arabic with an Indian twist. The relaunch introduced three exciting new brands that cater to different culinary preferences. For grill enthusiasts, T Grill offers a wide selection of grilled dishes that are sure to satisfy even the most discerning taste buds. Chai lovers can indulge in the aromatic blends and flavors of Chaiwala, a brand dedicated to delivering the perfect cup of tea. Lastly, pasta enthusiasts can savor the delightful fusion of flavors at Pasta Masala, which specializes in creating tantalizing pasta dishes.

The relaunch event was inaugurated by Mr Mohammed Haris Director of Lulu, in the presence of Fr Davis Chirmal, Director of Kidney Foundation of India, Hamoud Al Fadali Chairman of Thakkara Group Of Companies, Abdul Rasheed, Managing

Partner and Ashraf Ayoor, Managing Partner.


With the relaunch, Thakkara Dajeej aims to provide a diverse culinary experience for its customers, catering to a wide range of preferences and ensuring that there is something for everyone to enjoy.





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IIS-Mangaf holds inter-school maiden debate competition

India International School Mangaf (IISM) hosted its maiden 'Dr. P. A. Ibrahim Haji Memorial Inter-School Debate' competition on 5th and 6th May, at the school premises. Talented debaters from around 13 CBSE schools in Kuwait participated and showcased their oratory skills on the topic, 'Is Media Truly Independent?'

The event on 5 May was graced by the presence of Member of Indian Parliament, N. K. Premachandran, and his spouse Geetha Premachandran, and Member of Kerala Legislative Assembly, Dr. M. K. Muneer, and his spouse Nafeesa Muneer. The panel of esteemed judges judging the competition included, Advocate

Rajesh Sagar, a legal consultant for Kuwait Airways, Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, Reaven D'Souza, Editor of the Kuwait Times, Sa-jeev K Peter.

Others attending the event included PACE Group Representative, Mohamed Hisham. IISM Director Malayil Moosa Koya, Principal K.V. Indulekha, Vice-Principal Saleem Kundungal, Head Mistress Sri Devi Neelakannan, and the event coordinators, Najiyah Kader, Prema Balasubramanian, and Shihab Nilgiri, along with esteemed parents, teachers and students.

The young aspiring debaters, infused with the spirit of debating and rebuttal, put up an impressive performance while debating each other through well-structured and thought-provoking words. The judges played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the debate competition, skillfully evaluating and comparing the performances of all the participants, taking into account various factors such as content, delivery, style, and rebuttal. They had to make difficult decisions while ensuring that they remained objective and unbiased throughout the evaluation process. Additionally, the judges had to provide constructive feedback to the participants, highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement, to help them enhance their debating skills.

Winners of the competition were: Fida Ancy of Indian Educational School, Bhavans, who was declared as 'The Debate Champion' and Neha Annmary Saiju of United Indian School as the Runner-Up. Other winners included: Muhammed Rayhaan, Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian Private School, Jay Krishna, Indian Learners Own Academy, Shivani Menon, Indian Community School (Senior), Nuha Noufal, India International School, Mangaf, and Fraizner Fenil, Gulf Indian School.

Distribution of the 'Dr. P. A. Ibrahim Haji Memorial Inter-School Debate Competition' took place on 6 May with a galaxy of guests attending the event. Besides the dignitaries and officials present on the first day of the competition, the prize distribution ceremony also witnessed the presence of Adil Ibrahim, son of the school's

founder and chairman, the late Dr. P.A. Ibrahim Haji, as well as the CEO of PACE Group Asif Mohammed, Founder Principal Anees Ahmed, as well as the proud winners of the debate competition, teachers, students and last but not the least the Academic Achievers of the year 2021-22.

IISM Director Malayil Moosa Koya delivered the welcome address, expressing his happiness in welcoming the esteemed dignitaries. He proudly announced the completion of 21 years of IISM and highlighted the significant role played by the founder chairman late Dr. P.A. Ibrahim. Various esteemed guests then paid tribute to the late Dr. P.A. Ibrahim Haji and highlighted



his contributions to business, education, philanthropy, and as a human being.

The last segment of the program was the prize distribution. The debate champions and runners-up were honored with trophies, certificates, and sashes, while remarkable performers were presented with trophies. The academic excellence award of a gold coin, certificate and memento were conferred on Wafa Farook for Science stream, Amanya Sriram for Science Stream and Amatullah for Commerce stream. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by the event coordinator Shihab, who thanked the dignitaries, esteemed guests, parents, winners and participants of the debate competition, the technical team and the media coverage team and last but not least, the whole IISM family.



AlSayer partners in 'Ride for Wellness' campaign



A Memorandum of Understanding was signed last week between ALSAYER Holding, Kuwait Cycling Club (KCC), Corniche Cycling Club (CCC), and Velo, the bicycle superstore, to highlight the potential value of cycling as a sport and healthy mobility option for society.

The signing ceremony was attended by CEO of ALSAYER Holding Mubarak Al Sayer and Board Member of KCC, Othman Al Mutairi, in the presence of COO ALSAYER, Bengt Kurt Schultz, Senior GM of ALSAYER Car Rental, Munir Salous, GM ALSAYER Corporate

According to Mubarak Al Sayer "It's a gear change that such collaborations address health, culture, and local communities, from a perspective of UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 17, which emphasizes Good Health and Wellbeing, and Partnership for the Goals, respectively. We are glad to collaborate with experts internally and externally to address areas of opportunities that concern society."

For his part, Othman Al Mutairi of KCC praised the opportunity to attract, train and refine professional cycling experts to build qualified teams who can make cycling a sports career. "It will also encourage people of all ages and fitness levels to take up cycling and lead a healthier lifestyle," he added.

Pierre Moreau at CCC added: "We engage professional riders with training and high safety and security gadgets. It is essential to avoid any fatality on the road and they are trained on the dos and don'ts for a safe trip every time. We aim through this partnership to make cycling a popular sport". Velo the quality bicycle superstore will support the initiative by providing the needed equipment and spare parts. The CEO of Velo explained that cycling is a low-impact exercise that has numerous health benefits, including improving cardiovascular health, reducing stress, and increasing muscle strength and flexibility. So, we encourage all to join and ride a bicycle.

This partnership is expected to build a wider platform, including developing professional cycling teams, attracting new joiners to try professional and freestyle riding, driving the community towards healthier lifestyles, ensuring riders safety on the roads, and connecting individuals and helping them learn advanced cycling techniques, and product awareness. We welcome all to the 'Ride For Wellness Campaign' and experience a positive change.



Excellence, Nehad Al Haj Ali, GM of CCC, Pierre Moreau, CEO of VELO, Mohamad Al Ateeqi, and Eissa Al Gabandi of KCC.

Over the coming three months, until July 2023, around 30 professional cyclists will ride 120km on every Friday morning along Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway, with the aim of inviting new cycling enthusiasts to join, learn, and practice riding techniques.

Kuwait floats 10 tenders for road repairs

The government has set in motion the wheel to repair Kuwait's roads with the help of foreign companies and the details thereof are expected to be announced tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Al-Anba daily has learned that about 10 contracts will be floated for bidding to international contractors from several countries, whose numbers are estimated to be about 30 companies, reports local daily.

The sources pointed out that the contracts are expected to be divided into 6 tenders, with a tender for road repair for



each governorate, in addition to 4 other tenders related to the repair of main roads and bridges.



By Shoug AlShirazi
Special to The Times Kuwait

We are used to and always hearing that people travel to Cyprus in the summer, and that it thrives in tourism in this season due to the large number of resorts, beaches and beautiful marine activities in it.

I decided to go out of the ordinary and discover Cyprus in the winter season, and an opportunity to do so came in the form of an invitation from the Deputy of the Ministry of Tourism Savvas Persia.

My experience of winter in Cyprus exceeded my expectations. Cyprus is an island country located south of the Anatolian Peninsula in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It is geographically in Western Asia, but its cultural ties and geopolitics are overwhelmingly Southeastern European. Cyprus is the third-largest and third-most populous island in the Mediterranean, with Nicosias its capital and largest city.

I went directly from Larnaca international airport to my first spot in my schedule, the Larnaca Grand Mosque, also known as Umm Haram Mosque Hala Sultan Tekk, one of the holiest of shrines within Ottoman Islam, located on the west bank of Larnaca Salt Lake. Umm Haram was the wife of Ubada bin al-Samit, a companion of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, and foster sister of Muhammad's mother, Aminah bint Wahb.

The mosque adjoins the picturesque beauty of Salt Lake where you can see a massive number of flamingos during their migratory visit to Cyprus, where they spend the winter feeding off the plentiful brine shrimp in the lake.

Next on my itinerary was Omodos Village Square, the oldest and one of the largest, stone-paved squares in Cyprus. Constructed in 1910, this beautiful square in Omodos village encloses markets, crafts stores and food shops as well as restaurants, do not leave without tasting and buying the famous arkatena that you will find in the bakeries of the village.

September is a very important month in Omodos as the village celebrates the Feast of the Holy Cross on 14 September. Faithful Christians from all over Cyprus arrive in the village for a pilgrimage to the Holy Cross monastery in the center of the community.

Discover village life in Cyprus through a luxury hotel resort and spa retreat. Wander the trails, relax in the award-winning spa, eat and drink like a local in Casale Panayiotis, a traditional



mountain spa hotel in Cyprus.

Discover the treasure of Troodos Mountain. Due to its altitude, it is covered in snow during winter. It is a popular resort for skiers during the skiing months. Tourists and locals alike visit the mountains during the summer to take a break from the searing summer heat down at sea level. Walk through the forests on one of the nature trails and take in the wonderful scent, aromas, enjoy looking at the waterfalls and surrounding



views. For lovers of hiking through nature and exploring hidden places, Millomeri Waterfalls will be the perfect choice, the water of Millomeri falls from a height of 15 meters and is one of the highest natural waterfalls on the island. Located between Platres and Pera Pedi there is a nature trail leading to the waterfall.

Jingle all the way to the Cyprus Christmas Villages! Discover beautiful traditional villages and towns of Cyprus, which in turn will wow you with an array of authentic Christmas experiences to participate in and where you will make memories to last a lifetime. Cultural events, stands with local products and handicrafts, gastronomy and crafting workshops, organized activities in nature, guided village tours, local restaurants and hotels with delicious holiday menus and many other surprises await to be discovered for a unique Cypriot Christmas experience.

If you are a fan of halloumi, probably the most famous product of Cyprus, there is a local farm in the countryside that makes them fresh. And, let me tell you, the store-bought variety of halloumi pales in comparison to the taste of warm halloumi cheese made fresh. The tour of the farm was quite an experience, meeting the family and making the cheese was great fun and very informative. Seeing the process from beginning to end (and actually tasting the cheese we made) was really enjoyable.

A must visit place is Limassol marina as it is a landmark for Cyprus. The Limassol Marina has already been named as one of the most attractive and outstanding projects in Europe. There are plenty of activities that can be done around there to make your visit unforgettable, such as walking or cycling around the old town and discovering the heart of the city with its narrow streets and historical buildings. At the top end of the harbor there is a huge paved area surrounded by cafes, restaurants and shops. Do not miss the Graffiti Street in the same area.

Nicosia, the capital, is one of the most interesting capitals in Europe, with rich history and culture. The old town, which is the part of the capital inside the city walls, is one of the most stimulating travel routes in the entire island with a bustling atmosphere and a number of museums, shops, restaurants, and other attractions. Must see places are Eleftheria (liberty) square, Laiki Geitonia for experiencing Nicosia as it used to be in the 1900s, Ledra street, Venetian Walls and so much more to discover.





American Forces in Kuwait Conduct Competition to Determine Best Battalion

The American forces stationed in Kuwait recently organized a rigorous competition to select the best battalion within the US Central Army. The competition, which took place from May 6th to May 11th, included participants from the "Arifjan" and "Buehring" camps. Initially starting with 14 teams from the US forces in the two camps, comprised of 5 participants each, the competition culminated in 5 teams reaching the final qualifiers.

The intense competition featured demanding and challenging tests designed to enhance the combat efficiency of the soldiers and assess their capabilities across various military domains. These included physical fitness assessments, tactical task execution, problem-solving abilities, and the utilization of cutting-edge technologies in combat scenarios to counter emergency situations.

Staff Sergeant Brian Disk, responsible for overseeing the competition in the US Army Central in Kuwait, expressed his gratitude



towards Kuwait for hosting the American forces and lauded the exceptional facilities provided by the country.

He elaborated on the purpose of such competitions, which aim to foster a spirit of competition among soldiers and various

battalions to achieve optimal readiness for emergency situations and push their capabilities to the maximum. He emphasized the challenges these competitions present, both physically and mentally, as they test the soldiers' ability to collaborate effectively.

Additionally, he mentioned that apart from the objectives mentioned earlier, the winning battalion would qualify to participate in the US Army General Command competition to determine the overall best battalion, scheduled to be held in South Carolina in August.

Chief of Staff Sergeant Jacinto Garza, assigned as the chief advisor to the US Army Central, highlighted the best battalion competition's significance in evaluating various battalions' capacity to execute general military tasks and field exercises under realistic and challenging scenarios.

Garza stressed the importance of building on the capabilities of non-commissioned officers, emphasizing that the success of an army depends on empowering junior commanders to make decisions. He further stated that sharing their training model effectively could contribute to enhancing the Kuwaiti army, asserting that a strong team is characterized by mutual respect, care, and trust among its members.

Al-Muzaini sponsors training kit for Kuwait Women's Cricket

Al Muzaini Exchange Company, the number one exchange company in Kuwait and the proud sponsors of Kuwait Cricket, joined the Kuwait Women's cricket team and the management of Kuwait Cricket, at the Sulaibiya cricket ground, for the unveiling of the Women's training jersey with the Al Muzaini logo on the front of the kit.

Members of the Women's cricket team were presented with their new training kits by Guruprasad Kadri, the operations manager at Al Muzaini, Trevin Cutinho, the digital marketing officer at Al Muzaini, and Sajid Ashraf, the director-general of Kuwait Cricket Council Board. The event also saw the announcement of the shortlisted 20-women Kuwait National



Women's Cricket Team.

The players were excited to receive the kits and expressed their gratitude towards Al



Muzaini for the support and confidence that the company has placed in supporting women's cricket, and for being the first company to

sponsor women's cricket in Kuwait. Al Muzaini is extremely proud to be a part of the growth of women's cricket in Kuwait and encourages the young girls to actively take up the sport and conquer all milestones and break all records.

Al Muzaini also recently announced their Mega Promotion Campaign 2023. Transfer money through Al Muzaini for a chance to win a BMW X3 2023 and incredible prizes worth over \$130,000. For a chance to win, all you need to do is send money through Al Muzaini's branches, self-service kiosks, online or the mobile app and use any of their services. Transferring through the app multiplies your chances of winning. The campaign is slated to run from 23 March to 11 June.

Lethal Price of Sweatshop

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The organization of global supply chains, which employ more than 450 million people worldwide, both perpetuates this exploitation and helps to obscure its nature. By outsourcing jobs to developing countries, multinational firms can evade international labor standards and deprive workers of the rights and benefits accorded to direct employees. But this sleight of hand is not limited to the developing world. Exploitation is also rampant in the US garment industry, with workers in Los Angeles being paid as little as \$1.58 an hour. Even in the tech industry, workers are subjected to precarious working conditions and exploitative wages, as evidenced by conditions in Amazon fulfillment centers. Although the Rana Plaza disaster drew widespread condemnation and moral outrage, even from Pope Francis, little has been done in the past ten years to address the underlying issues that led to the collapse and its devastating human toll.

For example, while the legally binding

2013 Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh was renewed in 2018 and has more than 200 signatories, several major companies, including Levi Strauss, Gap, Walmart, and Amazon, refused to get on board. Instead, they opted for the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, a legally non-binding corporate alternative that ended in 2018.

While the Rana Plaza Arrangement — a fund set up by the International Labor Organization and multiple donors, NGOs, the Bangladeshi government, trade unions, and clothing brands — provided compensation for the survivors and victims' families, it was akin to putting a band-aid on a gangrenous wound. Despite some symbolic gestures of corporate social responsibility, workers in Bangladesh continue to face inadequate wages, unsafe working conditions, and unfair termination. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic may have left most even worse off, as brands currently pay lower prices for the same products.

The story of Rana Plaza is not an isolated

event but a microcosm of the abuse and exploitation endemic to globalized capitalism. Countries in the Global South are expected to overcome the legacy of colonialism and make up centuries of economic development in just a few decades. Many are attempting to do just that. Bangladesh, for example, has grown dramatically since gaining independence in 1971, largely owing to its position as the world's second-largest garment exporter.

But the calculus of capitalism prioritizes aggregates and national economic performance over the equitable distribution of gains among and within countries. Markets can provide no redress for employers' disproportionate appropriation of earnings at the expense of their workers. To achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and resources, Adam Smith's invisible hand must be restrained through regulation and redistributive policies.

The power imbalance between developed and developing countries renders the theoretical foundations of the global capitalist paradigm as shaky as a sweatshop built on

landfill. And, like Rana Plaza in its fateful last days, the cracks are starting to show, with rising inequality and looming climate threats undermining the system's fragile structure. But as Leonard Cohen famously put it, "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." If we are wise, we will not ignore the cracks, and will see the light.



Antara Haldar

Associate Professor of Empirical Legal Studies at the University of Cambridge, is a visiting faculty member at Harvard University and the principal investigator on a European Research Council grant on law and cognition.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Central Banks' Day of Reckoning Is Here



Jürgen Stark

A former member of the European Central Bank Executive Board and Governing Council, is a former deputy governor of the Deutsche Bundesbank and honorary professor at the University of Tübingen.

As energy prices continue to decline and the base effect of last year's price increases takes hold, inflation rates across the Western world are expected to fall. Even so, prices will likely remain unacceptably high for the foreseeable future, making true price stability a distant prospect.

Moreover, rising wages and ongoing geopolitical tensions, together with long-term structural factors such as demographic trends and deglobalization, are expected to keep inflation expectations above central-bank targets, burdening Western economies and societies in the long run.

Now is the time for central banks to take decisive action and improve their communication strategies. Policymakers must urgently explain the reasons for the current high inflation, its consequences, and the measures taken to address it. This communication must not be limited to market participants, as citizen engagement is just as important, if not more so. After all, citizens are central banks' most important partners in fighting inflation and protecting their own independence.

Effective communication requires a significant amount of insight, self-criticism, and humility. In the past, central banks have made

mistakes, such as misdiagnosing a period of price stability as an episode of unacceptably low inflation. Their asymmetric monetary policy over the past several decades, which resulted in progressively lower interest rates, reduced their potential room for maneuver and led to significant market distortions. Yet, despite evidence of harm caused by their ultra-expansive policy of low interest rates and massive balance-sheet expansion, central bankers repeatedly postponed ending it.

Policymakers were far too slow to recognize the inflationary forces unleashed by COVID-19-related supply-chain disruptions and the war in Ukraine. Neglecting or overlooking critical economic and monetary indicators, they considered the price surge to be a 'transitory' phenomenon that required no immediate action, and markets and the public

mandate of ensuring price stability to pursue other, unrelated policy goals, central bankers, once celebrated as heroes, have severely damaged their credibility. Particularly among eurozone countries, their analytical failure and professional misjudgment have called into question the reliability and effectiveness of their policymaking and recommendations to governments.

To regain the public's trust, central banks must abandon their monetary ivory tower. As interesting as lectures at universities and research institutions can be, their primary role is to affirm central bankers' own importance. But jargon-heavy academic discourse will not help central banks win over the general public. In its 2021 strategic review, the European Central Bank (ECB) stated that it should use more accessible language in future communications,

serves and must make a far greater effort to bridge the gap. Because it communicates mainly in English, every oral and written statement must be translated into national languages, and the task of public engagement mostly falls on national central banks, though this role is not clearly defined. In the pre-euro era, central banks communicated with citizens more effectively, sustaining a level of trust that the ECB currently lacks.

But national central banks have become even more alienated from the public since the euro was introduced almost 25 years ago. National monetary policymakers have failed to serve as effective information brokers, partly owing to internal disagreements within the ECB Governing Council. While using these disagreements as an opportunity to rally public support for dissenting views would have been problematic in the ECB's startup phase, that is likely no longer an issue now that the bank has matured.

In times of high inflation, it is crucial to re-establish the bond between national central banks and the public. To achieve this, banks must shed unnecessary tasks, free up capacity, focus solely on their core mandate, and launch comprehensive public outreach campaigns. But central banks cannot restore their credibility and win back the public's trust unless they take responsibility for and learn from their past mistakes.

Unfortunately, it seems that central banks are not willing to engage in this necessary process of self-reflection. To date, only the Reserve Bank of Australia has acknowledged its previous policy errors and taken steps to increase citizen engagement. Other central banks should follow the Australians' example – and hope that the damage caused by their past mistakes is repairable.

“By deviating from their core mandate of ensuring price stability to pursue other, unrelated policy goals, central bankers, once celebrated as heroes, have severely damaged their credibility. Particularly among eurozone countries,

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were given misleading signals that interest rates would be kept low until 2024. Because of these misdiagnoses and the delayed response to inflation, central banks had no choice but to pursue aggressive interest-rate hikes that caught market participants off-guard and led to distortions. By deviating from their core

educating the public on complex issues without oversimplifying them. Unfortunately, the ECB has not updated its language or become more citizen-friendly since then.

The ECB, responsible for ensuring price stability across 20 European countries, has become far too removed from the public it



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Greening Eastern Europe's Growth Engines

**Soňa Muzikárová**

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Over the past three years, a series of overlapping crises has exposed the structural weaknesses in Central and Eastern European (CEE) economies. Coming on the back of rising labor costs and declining productivity growth, one setback after another— an unprecedented pandemic, supply-chain shocks, a brutal war raging next door, extreme weather events, and an energy crunch — pummeled the region. With such unrelenting pressure making it almost impossible to regroup or plan for the long term, CEE economies have struggled to retool for a rapidly changing world.

The stakes of inaction could not be higher, as demonstrated by last summer's record-high temperatures. The extreme heat waves severely reduced supplies of potable water in some parts of Slovakia, a country known for abundant freshwater resources. The resulting drought was among the worst in several centuries, destroying more than 500,000 hectares of crops in Hungary, at an estimated cost of more than €1 billion (\$1.1 billion). Poland has suffered several years of drought, which, coupled with Russia's war in Ukraine, has driven up food prices. Rising temperatures have also contributed to an increased risk of wildfires and

other climate risks in Bulgaria and across the Balkan peninsula.

Yet even though global warming has resulted in sizable economic losses, the region has been fertile ground for climate skepticism, with political elites often downplaying risks or dragging their feet on meeting European Union policy targets. Polish President Andrzej Duda has been a vocal critic of the bloc's climate legislation. Former Czech President Miloš Zeman expressed the belief that the fight against climate change was "exaggerated" and that climate action had morphed into a "religion." He also advocated withdrawing from

coal — the 'dirtiest' fossil fuel by far. Ultimately, however, the region — led by the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary — resorted to nuclear power, the preferred source of clean energy for many CEE countries, though detractors raise concerns about radioactive waste and the industry's overall safety record.

The region has a large auto industry and heavy manufacturing sector; both are carbon-intensive and difficult to electrify, making large-scale industrial decarbonization in the next decade an uphill battle. Nuclear is a familiar fallback, and the deployment of renewables has been lackluster, hovering below the EU

structural economic change. The auto industry in Slovakia, which produces the world's most cars per capita, illustrates how the region remains on the back foot. In 2022, only about 15 percent of vehicles produced in the country were EVs, leaving a lot of ground to cover in the next decade.

To complete the shift away from internal combustion models, legacy automakers will need to overhaul entire assembly processes and supply chains; securing adequate supplies of batteries will be especially challenging. Countries can delay the inevitable by attracting new greenfield investments, as Slovakia did recently with German carmaker Porsche. Nonetheless, a massive shift in the next decade will be necessary to retain market share.

As CEE autoworkers correctly suspect, EVs will reduce the number of assembly jobs, all else being equal, because they require fewer parts. But the net effect will not be tragic, because job creation from new investments will offset some of the losses. Making up the rest will simply require upskilling, especially given the region's long standing labor-market tightness. In fact, the transition to EV production could lead to higher-quality jobs that are more intellectually engaging and better remunerated than assembly-line work.

In terms of scale and scope, the economic restructuring needed in Central and Eastern Europe is second only to the post-communist transition three decades ago. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced the EU's eastern flank to channel resources to more immediate concerns like beefing up defense capabilities, helping millions of refugees, and blunting the impact of sky-high inflation. But the region must not lose sight of the future — and the work that must be done now to ensure that it is a prosperous one.

“ Slovakia, which produces the world's most cars per capita, shows how the region remains on the back foot. In 2022, only about 15 percent of vehicles made in the country were EVs, leaving a lot of ground to cover in the next decade. ”

the European Green Deal.

The energy crisis triggered by the Ukraine war has, at long last, presented an opportunity for the region to wean itself off Russian natural gas and embrace renewables. To be sure, it prompted a quantum leap in supply diversification and energy-demand reduction. But implementing a long-term decarbonization strategy took a backseat to keeping households heated and industry humming.

One could even argue that the war caused climate backsliding: high natural-gas prices led to a significant increase in dependence on

average, which also reflects widespread climate skepticism and distrust of green policies, which CEE residents tend to view as a threat to their livelihoods, rather than as job creators.

But mass electric-vehicle (EV) use now appears inevitable, and the region is unprepared, having squandered years of low interest rates and cheap money that it could have used to fund the transition. Germany's last-minute change of heart on the EU's previously agreed decision to ban sales of new cars with internal combustion engines by 2035 reflects the political difficulty of implementing



Heart-healthy foods to reduce risk of CVD

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are a group of disorders that involve the heart or blood vessels or both. According to health experts, CVDs include coronary heart disease (CHD), cerebrovascular disease, peripheral arterial disease, rheumatic heart disease, congenital heart disease, and deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism. CVDs are the leading cause of deaths in both developed and developing countries.

In Kuwait, CVDs are estimated to cause 41 percent of all mortalities. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2019, of the 5,389 deaths attributed to non-communicable deaths in Kuwait, a total of 2,996 deaths were from CVDs. Among the total CVD deaths, the vast majority was due to Ischaemic heart disease, which is the result of reduced blood flow to the heart caused by a narrowing of coronary arteries. The WHO data on total deaths in Kuwait also shows that CVDs are the largest cause of mortality in Kuwait, not only killing more people than all other non-communicable diseases combined, but also killing more people than all types of communicable diseases and deaths from injuries and unidentified causes combined.

An earlier survey on CVD awareness among the public was revelatory in that, despite the high rate of mortality from heart-related diseases in Kuwait, the level of knowledge on these diseases were dismally low. Almost 60 percent of survey respondents did not know any type of CVD, heart attack or strokes. Coronary heart disease was the commonest identified type (29%) of heart disease.

In addition, the survey showed that two-fifths of participants were not aware of any heart attack symptoms, and the most commonly known symptoms among respondents were chest pain (50.4%) and shortness of breath (48.0%). Also around half of those surveyed did not recognize any stroke symptoms, and the most commonly recognized were 'confusion or trouble speaking' (36.4%) and 'numbness or weakness' (34.7%).

When it came to the knowledge of CVD risk factors, knowledge among respondents was moderate, with the commonest factors identified by over four-fifths of participants being smoking, obesity, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Deficiency in CVD knowledge could reflect in a lack of sufficient preventative behaviors and suboptimal patient outcomes.

There is clearly a need for more widespread and effective awareness programs, especially at the educational level, and particularly on the need for diet modifications. The importance of altering diets is stressed by the fact that of the three important controllable risk factors associated with heart disease — high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking — two can be altered by diet. There are several important dietary changes that people can make, which will reduce their risk for heart disease and improve their all-around health. Here we provide a few guidelines:

While many foods are linked with good heart health, a shift to a largely plant-based diet is particularly beneficial. Among plant-based foods, the best ones for the heart are pulses, soy, and seeds and nuts. Pulses and soy foods are rich in fiber, which can help reduce LDL blood cholesterol levels, the so-called 'bad' cholesterol, glucose levels, and chronic inflammation.

Nuts and seeds also have fiber and phytochemicals, but



they also contain heart-healthy unsaturated fats, which are shown to reduce LDL cholesterol levels. In addition, these fiber-rich foods boost the gut microbiome, which has impacts on overall heart health.

Awareness of the deleterious effects of certain nutrients present in foods is important to help you make healthy food choices. Among nutrients to avoid are trans fats, which are known to promote 'bad' cholesterol and reduce 'good' cholesterol, while also promoting inflammation in the body.

Most foods do not contain trans fats, but since foods that contain less than 0.5 g per serving can be labeled as 'zero trans fats', it is better to look for words such as 'partially hydrogenated oil' in the ingredients list to make sure there is really no trans fat present.

Trans fats are generally formed through an industrial process that adds hydrogen to vegetable oil, which causes the oil to become solid at room temperature. Since partially hydrogenated oil is inexpensive and less likely to spoil, foods made with it have a longer shelf life. Also some restaurants use partially hydrogenated vegetable oil in their deep fryers, since it does not have to be changed as often as other oils.

Partially hydrogenated oils can be found in foods such as cakes, cookies and pies available from shops, in shortening used in cooking, in frozen pizzas, microwave popcorn, refrigerated dough for biscuits and rolls, non-dairy coffee-creamers, margarine, as well as in fried foods, including french fries, doughnuts and fried chicken.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

International Nurses Day, Our Nurses, Our Future

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on 12 May, which is the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birthday in 1820. Held this year under the theme of 'Our Nurses, Our Future', the global campaign organized by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) sets out how nurses in future will contribute to addressing global health challenges and improve global health for all.

Nursing the world to health

Joby Baby,
Registered Nurse,
KOC Hospital, Kuwait

There are more than 20 million nurses around the world and each one of them has a story. They know about hope and courage, joy and despair, pain and suffering, and life and death. As an ever-present force for good, nurses hear the first cries of newborn babies and witness the last breaths of the dying. They are present at some of life's most precious moments, and at some of its most tragic.

Nurses serve humanity and, by their actions, they protect the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and nations. Around the world, people recognise nursing as one of the most honest and ethical of the professions. People instinctively trust and respect nurses and the work that they do.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) believes that it is vitally important to show the world who nurses are and what they do, especially this year. The theme for the 2023 International Day of Nurses is 'Our Nurses. Our Future'. ICN wants the voice of nursing to be heard around the globe, to spread the word about this great profession and how it contributes to the wellbeing of the world.

As carers, healers, educators, leaders and advocates, nurses are fundamental in the provision of safe, accessible and affordable care. The year 2023 is an important time for nursing. It provides the opportunity to clearly demonstrate to policy makers, health professionals and the public about the enormous contribution of nurses to health and wellbeing. This is our moment. Let us seize this time not just for the sake of nursing, but for the benefit to the health of our world.

More than 200 years later, Florence Nightingale speaks to us today. Her understanding of the physical and psychological environment of the hospital and home reveal not only a deep scientific understanding of hygiene, but health and healing, details of care that added to comfort as well as nourishment of the human spirit.

Her teaching on hygiene remains exemplary as we battle with sepsis, excess mortality attributable to hospital acquired infections: MRSA and C. difficile.

Added to that, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is poised to be one of the leading causes of mortality by 2050, in which handwashing and hygiene may be some of the most potent defenses against transmission.

Today, she would urge an intergenerational approach, with young and older leaders trained together in organizing methods and political influencing skills. Together, they would act as the new generation Nightingales who would lead the charge and create nursing as a global social movement for social good.

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