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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Now that the falsehoods and obfuscation of climate denialism have finally been silenced, addressing climate change has become the world's top priority. But time is running out, and the International Monetary Fund warns that any further delays on implementing policies to mitigate global warming will only add to the economic cost of the transition to a low-emissions economy. Worse, we still lack a concrete, pragmatic strategy for tackling the problem. Although economists have made a robust case for why carbon taxes are the best solution, this option has proven politically infeasible, at least in those countries that account for some of the highest emissions (namely, the United States).

Commentators have also stressed that climate change is a shared problem involving important cross-border externalities that must be addressed through a multilateral approach to global coordination. But, as with carbon taxes, this argument has fallen on deaf ears. And, given the current geopolitical climate and the increasing fragmentation of the global economy, there is little hope that the message



will get through anytime soon.

Having committed to assisting developing economies as they confront climate change, the World Bank finds itself limited by the country-based model underlying its financing operations. It is earnestly weighing its options

and considering how it could coordinate climate-related financing across borders. But while such efforts are well meaning and consistent with the spirit of multilateralism, they inevitably will delay concrete action. World Bank financing would have to be completely restructured, and

coordinating action across multiple countries that have limited financial resources and often conflicting interests seems an impossible task. For example, while some developing economies are rich in fossil fuels, others are starved for energy sources.

Given these limitations, pragmatism dictates focusing on the biggest polluters. Global carbon dioxide emissions are concentrated among only a handful of countries and regions. China, the US, the European Union, Japan, and Russia collectively account for 63 percent of the total, and none of these top polluters is a low-income country anymore. China, the poorest of the group, represents around 30 percent of all emissions, making it by far the world's largest current polluter in absolute terms. But its government is taking steps to accelerate the transition to green energy — a winning strategy, given the country's abundance of rare earth metals.

India, the third-largest emitter, currently accounts for approximately 7 percent of global CO2 emissions, and its size and growth trajectory imply that it could easily surpass China as the leading polluter, barring stronger climate policies.

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Philippines to maintain ban on workers despite visa ban by Kuwait



Government of the Philippines has shown remarkable flexibility regarding Kuwait's suspension of new entry visas for Filipino workers. Moreover, the government considers this as an attempt by Kuwait to put pressure on Manila to rescind its decision to ban the recruitment of new domestic workers to Kuwait, "we have not decided to lift the ban for the moment," said the Philippines Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Eduardo de Vega. However, he added that the ban by the Philippines was not permanent and could be lifted in future depending on talks with the Kuwaiti side.

Philippines ban could be lifted in being

hired as domestic although it considered that "Kuwait's strictness represents a step to put pressure on Manila's decision to lift the ban imposed on the travel of its workers," the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Eduardo de Vega, said, "We have not decided to lift the ban now, but this doesn't mean we won't do that."

Speaking during a television interview in the Philippines, De Vega explained that any decision to lift the ban imposed on the deployment of Filipino workers in Kuwait would be based on the conditions Manila had set since last February. He also noted that the ban by Kuwait is on issuing new visas and would not affect workers who were already holding Kuwait's residence visas.

Elaborating on the employment agreement violations cited by the Kuwaiti side, the undersecretary stated: "There were two recurring issues that the Kuwaiti government was concerned about related to the bilateral labor agreement between the two countries. The first issue is with regard to the initiative to establish a shelter for runaway Filipino domestic workers, and efforts to reach out to Kuwaiti employers regarding reports of violations."

He explained that "Kuwait considered these verbal efforts as violations of labor laws, and that the establishment of a shelter

for Filipinos who flee their employers due to violations is not supported under Kuwaiti law." He clarified that the issue was that "under Philippine Law, the government and by extension the Philippines Embassy is bound to protect its nationals and set up shelters for them."

De Vega added, "We do not encourage the workers to run away from their employers, and this is what the Kuwaiti side fears. But when faced with abuse and compelled to leave the employer for their safety, they must have a secure place to seek shelter."

The second issue that Kuwait considered a violation of the bilateral employment agreement, was that the Philippine government requires the foreign recruitment agency of the worker in Kuwait to contact the employer in case of abuse. But the Kuwaiti law does not provide for this provision.

"While Kuwait refers to these issues as violations, they are not clearly defined in the agreement between our two countries. Whether they are violations or not, it is something that the two governments need to discuss to solve the problem," said the Philippines undersecretary.

He also noted that the "decision to lift the ban or not is under discussion by the relevant agencies in the Philippines, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of

Migrant Workers." Additionally, he stressed that the "ban was imposed because of a heinous crime committed against one of our citizens. The country is still seeking justice in the death of Jollibee Ranara, the domestic worker, who was killed by her employer's son and her body burned and thrown into the desert."

De Vega indicated that "meetings will be held with Kuwaiti officials this month, as it is expected that the two countries will resume the terms of the current bilateral agreement. I'm sure there will be a reciprocal appeal. Therefore, we may have to make some revisions to the work agreement, or we may come up with a new working paper on how to move forward."

The Philippine Foreign undersecretary also said that "while the suspension of issuing entry visas to Filipinos to Kuwait includes all workers, its impact is not huge," considering that "there are not many non-domestic workers who are now working in Kuwait. For those who are already there and have residence permits, they will be able to travel home to the Philippines and return to work in Kuwait. He also said that among the 275,000 and 300,000 Filipinos currently in Kuwait, almost all of them have residence permits, while between five to ten thousand Filipinos may not have valid documents."

LuLu Hypermarket opens new outlet in Khiran



LuLu Group, leading retailer in the region, opened its latest hypermarket in the State of Kuwait. The store which is also 12th in the country was officially inaugurated by Abdul Wahab Al Marzook, Vice Chairman of Tamdeen Group at Khiran Outlet mall in Khiran city in the presence of Dr. Matar Hamid Al Neyadi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group and other dignitaries.

Also present on the occasion were their

excellencies Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Indian Ambassador, and Manelisi Genge, the South African Ambassador, large number of diplomats, government officials and other dignitaries. Spread over 35,000 sq. feet, the fresh market will offer a wide range of fresh fruits, vegetables, grocery food, non-food items, health and beauty products, meat and seafood and a special area for local agri produces.

One of the notable highlights of the store

include self-checkout counters for convenient shopping experience, as well as a dedicated area for fresh juice station. In addition to this, shoppers can explore a wide selection of household items, toys, party supplies, seasonal products, and outdoor essentials, ensuring their diverse needs are met.

Khiran Outlet Mall, which covers a vast project area of more than 3 million sq. feet, is one of Kuwait's first hybrid malls, offering a unique

shopping and entertainment experience. The mall boasts a parking space for 3,700 cars, ensuring convenient access for shoppers. Moreover, it features a marina with 900 berths, catering to maritime enthusiasts.

Also present on the occasion were Saifee Rupawala, CEO of Lulu Group, Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director, Mohamed Haris, Lulu Kuwait Director, Sreejith, Regional Director of Lulu Kuwait and other senior officials.

PPF Kuwait organizes professional gathering TRANSCEND '23

Progressive Professional Forum Kuwait (PPF) held a conclave of professionals in Kuwait under the banner of 'TRANSCEND '23' to share key learnings. The event was held as part of the PPF Annual General Meeting on 11 May at the Kohinoor Hall in Fahaheel.

PPF Kuwait President Adv Thomas Stephen in his address stressed that PPF Kuwait has attained a respectable space among the top socially responsible professional organizations serving the community in Kuwait and in India. Entering the 10th-anniversary celebrations, PP Kuwait will continue its journey to contribute to the inclusive development of society.

Top professionals in Kuwait shared their key learnings and experience in TRANSCEND '23. In his talk titled, 'A True Professional Story', P.C.

George, senior consultant engineer with Kuwait MEW, who was honored by the Indian Navy as a War Hero, shared an enlightening message to professionals to understand the growth, challenges, and the importance of work-life balance while pursuing a professional career.

For his part, CEO of Mark Technologies, Suresh C. Pillai, inspired the professionals and budding entrepreneurs with his 'Success Journey of an Entrepreneur in Kuwait'. Meanwhile, in his presentation on 'Experience, Exchange and Extend Resources for Circular Economic Growth', Valliappan, a corrosion specialist and consultant with KOC initiated a thought-provoking session on resource conservation and minimum waste generation. Loka Kerala Sabha Member, R. Naganadhan



then shared updated information about various welfare, investment, and pension schemes by the Kerala Government suitable for expatriates, to help them continue a secure and comfortable retirement life in Kerala.

An e-Magazine TRANSCEND '23 was released on the occasion by senior PPF Kuwait member K. Santhosh Kumar. Earlier, PPF General-Secretary, Sherly Sasi Rajan, presented the report on PPF Kuwait activities for the year



2022-23, while Sreejith Palakkurishi, the forum treasurer submitted the accounts statement. The event was well coordinated by the Master of Ceremony, Shaji Madathil.

Mementos were presented on behalf of PPF Kuwait to all the speakers and a dinner was also arranged. Vice President of PPF Kuwait and convener of TRANSCEND '23, Prasanth Warriar, concluded the event with his vote of thanks.



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Canada and Kuwait, strong partners in progress

H.E. Aliya Mawani, Ambassador of Canada

STAFF REPORT

Canada and Kuwait are further intensifying coordination and cooperation on several regional and international issues while further discussing ways to continue joint efforts in promoting international peace and security, stated the Canadian Ambassador H.E. Aliya Mawani during a press briefing at her residence on 15 May.

While praising the bilateral cooperation between the two friendly nations, Ambassador Mawani noted that relations have reached new levels that are mutually beneficial. She highlighted the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the establishment of a bilateral political consultation mechanism

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mélanie Jolie, the ambassador said, the talks encompassed all aspects of the close historical ties and the framework for strengthening and developing them accordingly.

On the military cooperation between the two countries, Ambassador Mawani said, "We have a permanent base in Kuwait at Ali Al-Salem Airbase which houses about 250 members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and is the headquarters for Joint Task Force IMPACT – Canada's effort to enhance regional security. The CAF forces present in Kuwait and across the region are working to promote regional security and stability and help partners counter future threats. This makes Kuwait a key defence partner for Canada."

part of increased engagement between the two countries.

Ambassador Mawani disclosed that there were approximately 7,500 Canadians residing in Kuwait and contributing to the development of Kuwait in various fields.

Regarding granting visas to Kuwaitis, Mawani requested interested visitors to apply for a Canada visa in advance, noting that the period for obtaining a visa may take up to a month. She noted that student visas are processed as quickly as possible. She also praised the activities of the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in Canada, which she said works closely with Canadian institutions and greatly supports Kuwaiti students studying there.

The validity of Canadian visas is linked to the passport validity and she clarified that conditions for obtaining a Canadian visa applies to all nationalities who wish to travel to Canada.

She disclosed that about 450 Kuwaiti students are enrolled in Canadian universities annually, and that Kuwaiti doctors, graduates of Canadian universities, are very highly regarded and often hold leadership positions in Kuwaiti hospitals and healthcare institutions.

On the issue of what has come to be known as fake immigration offices and how to deal with them, she said: "Yes, it is true that there are a number of these fake offices and neither the Embassy nor the Government of Canada has any authority over them. Unfortunately these offices can often take advantage of applicants.. What I can say in this regard is to ask all immigration seekers to Canada to visit the official website for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to obtain information or to contact our VFS office at Raya Center directly about this matter. There is a lot of information required from the applicants, including the fingerprint and we want to ensure that applicants are getting proper and accurate guidance."

On the economic cooperation between the two countries, she disclosed Kuwait is Canada's third economic partner in the Gulf region, and "we have great cooperation with it in various fields such as health and information communication technology (ICT), oil and gas, as well as food security, which became a necessity after the Corona pandemic."

Regarding her vision of Kuwaiti women on Kuwaiti Women's Day, she said: This day is very important for Kuwaiti women and for Kuwait



as a country because when all members of society are able to contribute fully, it makes our societies stronger." "I have been fortunate to meet a number of Kuwaiti women who enjoy key positions in Kuwaiti society. Kuwaiti women are smart, persistent, and have great capabilities, and they make important contributions from the private sector, to civil society as academics, in healthcare, as well as in government institutions, and they have impressive skills and experience and we cooperate closely with them in a range of fields." She also indicated that the Kuwaiti laws related to women and their families are good but that many Kuwaitis themselves note that the laws require further uniformity in their implementation in order to be more effective

The Canadian envoy praised Kuwait's principled position in the United Nations regarding the Ukrainian crisis and its repercussions at the regional and international levels, as well as the humanitarian efforts made in this framework and the joint work towards preserving the international order, consecrating the values and principles of international law, and maintaining international peace and security.



'strategic dialogue' between the two countries, which she said reflects the development and consolidation of bilateral relations in all fields and at various levels.

She noted that the MOU is aimed at further strengthening political, commercial, investment, and defence and security cooperation between the two friendly countries, expressing her happiness with this fruitful cooperation. The Ambassador also pointed out that the signing of the memorandum reflects the determination of the nations to develop and consolidate bilateral relations in all fields and at different levels.

Pointing to the recent visit of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al Sabah to Canada and the holding of bilateral talks with

Stressing the importance of Kuwait and the region for her country, she thanked Kuwait for being the transit point for 4,000 Canadians and Afghans fleeing the war in Afghanistan, who passed through Kuwait during their transfer from Kabul to Canada and added that Kuwait was the main base for Canadian forces in the region.

Ambassador Mawani thanked Kuwait for hosting the Canadian Armed Forces on its territory and for the facilities provided by the government in this context. She also noted that Kuwait is the first Gulf country with which Canada has signed a development cooperation agreement, which boosts cooperation in the fields of development and humanitarian assistance, and exchange of technical expertise and information sharing as



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King Charles III Exhibition held at Beit Dickson



The exhibition, 'King Charles III at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II', was held by the Kuwaiti-British relations researcher Issa Dashti at Beit Dickson Cultural Center, in the presence of the British and Romanian ambassadors and a large number of history enthusiasts.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikha Hala Bader Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, head of the Diplomatic Women's Committee, mentioned that King Charles had made eight official visits to Kuwait, all of them when he was Crown Prince and Prince of Wales. His first visit was in 1989, and the first visit with

the Queen Consort was in 2007.

She emphasized that the relationship between Kuwait and Britain began in 1775, which both the rulers and people of Kuwait worked to strengthen, while the British Empire worked to solidify and support it. She added that the exhibition contains beautiful historical photographs and artifacts, including one that shows His Majesty's presence when he was four years old at the coronation of his mother.

Noting that the strong and distinctive relationship between King Charles III and Kuwait, its rulers, and its people is reflected

through this exhibition, she stated, "We, as a government and a people, have deep love, appreciation, and great respect for him."

In turn, the British Ambassador, H.E. Blenda Lewis, stressed the depth of the bilateral relations between Britain and Kuwait in various fields. She pointed out that Beit Dickson is an architectural testimony to the historic bilateral friendship between the United Kingdom and Kuwait and a symbol of the long-standing partnership between the two countries.

Further expressing her admiration for the exhibition, describing it as magnificent,

distinctive, and particularly special due to its collection of rare photographs of King Charles alongside some exquisite clothing and jewelry.

She mentioned that these photographs carried a significance that reflects the depth of responsibility that King Charles carried on his shoulders, noting that the new king is committed to following in the footsteps of his mother, who set a wonderful example of serving everyone. She added that King Charles III is committed to serving his country and strengthening relations between the United Kingdom and many of its close allies.

Kuwait, Philippines hold inconclusive talks

Ongoing dispute between Kuwait and the Philippines on the issue of Filipino domestic helpers, appears nowhere close to being settled with both sides remaining firm to their original stance.

The talks held last week between the relevant officials in Kuwait and the visiting delegation from the Philippines have reportedly failed to find an amicable solution acceptable to both sides.

Kuwait maintains its position that

establishing shelters for runaway domestic helpers by the Philippines Embassy is in contravention of the country's laws, as well as the agreement reached by the two sides in earlier talks.

For its part, the Philippines announced that it would remain open to constructive dialogue on how to address the current circumstances and concerns, indicating that the delegation, which included officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Migrant Workers, stressed during the talks full respect for Kuwaiti laws, and deep appreciation for the presence of more than 200,000 Filipino workers who consider Kuwait their second home.



Day care surgery opens at Super Metro Salmiya



Metro Medical Group, a leading private healthcare provider in Kuwait, launched a Day Care Surgery Department at its Super Metro Salmiya unit on 15 May.

The grand event was graced by esteemed individuals, including Kuwait Parliament Member Ahmad Mahmoud Asker, notable figures Dr. Ali Sadah and Fahad Al Khandari, as well as diplomatic representatives from the Embassies of India, Philippines, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Additionally, representatives from the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) and socio-cultural leaders were present to commemorate this milestone. The Managing Director Ibrahim, and Dr. Biji Basheer of the Metro Management Group also graced the inaugural function.

The Day Care Surgery Department will be overseen by renowned and experienced surgeons, including Consultant General Surgeon and Gastroenterologist, Dr. Devidas Shetty, and General and Laparoscopic Surgeon Dr. Alisher. They will be joined by Dr. Rafik, a specialist, and Dr. Tamanna from the anesthesia department.

They will provide comprehensive services for a wide range of surgeries, such as endoscopy, laparoscopy, colonoscopy, hernia repair, circumcision, piles treatment, appendicitis, fistula repair, gall bladder procedures, orthopedic surgeries, gynecology procedures, ENT treatments, ophthalmology surgeries, and more.

As part of the new department's inauguration, Metro Medical Group management announced an enticing promotional offer for a limited period of two months, from 15 May to 15 July. The promotion includes a complimentary consultation with a general surgeon, a generous 30 percent discount on all pre-surgery laboratory tests, and a comprehensive full body checkup package available for KD12. The full body check up package covers essential tests such as vitamin D levels, blood sugar analysis, lipid profile assessment, creatinine levels, uric acid levels, liver screening, urine routine examination, complete blood count (CBC), electrocardiogram (ECG), and blood pressure assessment.

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Palestine Embassy commemorates 75th anniversary of 'Nakba'

In a press conference held on 15 May to mark the 75th anniversary of 'Nakba' — the displacement of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948 — Palestinian Ambassador, H.E. Rami Tahboub highlighted Kuwait's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and its commitment to standing alongside Palestine in international forums. He expressed his gratitude and admiration for Kuwait's stance and its continued exceptional relationship with Palestine.

Elaborating on the Nakba, Ambassador Tahboub emphasized that the Palestinian Nakba, which began in 1948, persists to this day. He described it as an ongoing tragedy, with the Israeli occupation seeking to displace Palestinians and perpetuate their suffering.

The Arab Peace Initiative remains in effect, and all Arab countries, without exception, continue to adhere to its principles. He regarded

the initiative as a significant reference for the peace and political processes in the Middle East.

He expressed openness to any international effort that would contribute to ending the Israeli occupation, establishing an independent Palestinian state, and restoring the rights of the Palestinian people. He added that the protection of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the preservation of Jerusalem's sanctities are fundamental concerns for Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims alike.

Ambassador Tahboub also shared that between 350 and 400 Kuwaiti individuals, along with official and civil institutions, have visited Palestine in the past five years. He expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti Red Crescent for its efforts in restoring approximately 20 shops in Jerusalem's Old City markets, contributing to the revitalization of the area.

Furthermore, He noted that 750 Palestinian



teachers have arrived in Kuwait since 2017. He revealed that an additional batch of 70 teachers is expected to arrive in the country soon, reinforcing the educational cooperation between Palestine and Kuwait.

The enduring bond between Kuwait and

Palestine continues to grow stronger, with Kuwait's consistent support serving as a source of encouragement for the Palestinian people. As both nations work together, the hope for a peaceful and prosperous future remains steadfast, said the ambassador.



Nicaraguan Embassy holds cultural fest

Nicaraguan Embassy organized a cultural evening under the banner of 'Nicaragua - Yesterday and Today', at the embassy premises on 16 May. The event also marked the birth anniversary of the country's revolutionary leader and symbol of national resistance, Augusto Cesar Sandino.

Speaking on the occasion, Nicaraguan Ambassador, H.E. Mohamed Farara Lashtar, urged Arab investors to consider investing in his country, emphasizing that the favorable conditions offer promising returns. He also highlighted Nicaragua's Foreign Investment Law, which guarantees protection and ease of investment through freedom of ownership and seamless financial transactions.

Ambassador Lashtar also shared that Nicaragua welcomes visitors from all countries and that while some countries still require visas due to unstable conditions, countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council, including Kuwait, enjoy visa-free entry.

He also spoke about the Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega contributions for the Palestinian cause, emphasizing the close bond between the Sandinista Front for National Liberation and the Palestinian resistance movement, with members of the Sandinista Front having participated in joint operations with the Palestine Liberation Organization during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

He recalled President Ortega's first visit to Kuwait in 1992, when he reiterated his commitment to peace and his efforts to foster global harmony. An official protocol agreement was signed between Kuwait and Nicaragua in 1990, and in 2013 the Nicaraguan embassy was established in Kuwait. Expressing gratitude to Kuwait for its cooperation and solidarity, Ambassador Lashtar noted that the Nicaraguan embassy in Kuwait is the only one representing Nicaragua in Africa and the Arab world.

He also underscored the contributions over the years by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, including in the construction of the largest hospital in Chinandega, Nicaragua's third-largest city. He added that Nicaragua is known for its agricultural and animal production driven by over 250,000 small and medium-sized agricultural businesses and productive cooperatives. The ambassador voiced his hope that as Nicaragua opens its doors to Arab investors, the country will be able to forge mutually beneficial partnerships that will drive economic growth and foster stronger ties between nations.



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Al-Atl warns Kuwait may find it difficult to provide jobs for engineers

The head of the Kuwait Engineers Society, Eng. Faisal Al-Atl, warned against finding jobs for engineering graduates, explaining that the number of graduates is 3,000 annually and the actual need for the government and private labor market does not exceed 1,000.

Al-Atl told Al-Rai daily that the KES has prepared a list of 13,000 expatriate engineers who have not passed the professional tests carried out by the society in cooperation with the Kuwait University and also "we did not find a clear response in this regard."

He pointed out that the outburst in announcing new public benefit associations is an attempt to weaken the power of civil society in combating the forces of corruption, indicating that the number of public benefit associations in 2004 does not exceed 25 which have established since the 1960s and their objectives are clear and applied to reality. Here are the details of the conversation:

He added, because there is no coordination between education of all kinds and the need of the labor market, and since the annual turnout of engineers far outpace the need of the labor market, there is a need for specialized engineers in the oil sector, such as machinery and drilling engineers, but no one studies these disciplines, while the focus is on petroleum engineering in general, so there is an imbalance in the labor

market and its needs in which the graduate will not find an opportunity to work in the future with his certificate.

He went on to say that the KES has submitted a proposal and called on the Public Authority for Manpower to amend the Kuwaitization law in the private sector so that the rate is not less than 30 percent for Kuwaitis.

He added, until 2004, the number of public benefit associations was approximately 25, and they have been operating since the 1960s, according to goals and plans to develop and serve their members and society in general.

However, after this date, the number exceeded 100 associations with the same goals and technical specializations. It seems that some of these associations have a political goal that may weaken the strength of the civil society in confronting corruption, dispersing its ideas, and interfering in its work, and public benefit associations, especially professional associations, since their inception, serving the country and the citizen through declared goals and activities for all.

Meanwhile, he said according to published figures, the number of Kuwaiti engineers working in the private sector does not exceed 2,000, unlike oil engineers and the government sector.

He added, the KES supports the employment of Kuwaiti engineers, and the Kuwaitization of



the engineering sector, and "this is our major demand and in all our meetings with officials, we call for opening new work horizons and stopping the queue system for Kuwaiti engineers in the government sector, and we have initiated the rehabilitation of hundreds of engineers to replace them in the private sector as well.

"In this regards, we presented a project to replace the Kuwaiti engineers to work in the private sector by regulating the engineering labor market in Kuwait under the title 'Engineers are future leaders' which has so far received a lukewarm response by assigning the association the task of accrediting non-Kuwaiti engineers," he said.

He went on to say, that everyone who submits an application for membership and fulfills the

conditions gets it, and we have members and colleagues from the bedoun category and they enjoy all the services provided by the society except they don't have the voting right in the elections for the society's board members.

Al-Atl confirmed that the Society of Engineers is the oldest public benefit society in Kuwait, as it was established in 1962, with the beginning of the urban and economic renaissance and shortly after Kuwait's independence, and its objectives focused on the following:

- Contributing to the industrial and urban renaissance in the country.
- Preserving the rights and legitimate professional interests of engineers.
- Organizing the rules for practicing the profession and raising their standards.
- Work on consolidating ties and documenting scientific and technical cooperation between engineers in Kuwait and their colleagues in Arab and foreign countries.
- Encouraging the conduct of engineering research and the development of Arab engineering specifications in partnership with the concerned institutions and bodies.
- Seek to resolve disputes that occur between engineers or between them and their clients in connection with engineering work.
- Encouraging engineering vocational training in Kuwait by various available means.

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SHAIKH JABER AL-AHMED CULTURAL CENTRE

Thought for the week "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

– Albert Einstein

RECIPE



This easy-to-prepare millet vegetable risotto is a delicious classic dish made with barnyard millet and loaded with a mixture of chopped and simmered vegetables. It has loads of protein and carbohydrates and the veggies are an added health quotient. Not to mention that it makes a quick and ideal meal for those busy weeknights. Try this light and fresh take on creamy, velvety risotto and you may never go back to standard fare.

Total time: 30 minutes

Serving: 2 as a main dish or 4 as a side dish

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 cup mix vegetable (carrot, peas, beans)
- 1 onion chopped
- 1 jalapeno chili
- 1 cup barnyard millet
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- Salt to taste

- 1/4 tsp black pepper powder.
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp vinegar or lime juice

Instructions:

- Heat oil in a large saute pan and add the chopped veggies and chili
- Saute until the vegetables start to soften
- Add the barnyard millet and saute for about 1-2 minutes until it starts to brown
- Add 1 cup of vegetable broth to the pan and stir gently over low heat
- As the water evaporates, add another cup of broth and stir gently
- Check the millet to ensure it is cooked.
- If not, add a little water and stir until the millet is tender
- Sprinkle salt, pepper and a dash of vinegar over the risotto, give it a gentle stir.
- Remove pan from heat, and stir in butter to give the risotto a glossy creamy look
- Serve hot.



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

Loyal employees cornerstone of businesses

Nurturing loyal employees who are engaged and satisfied at work is the cornerstone of a business. A new regional survey on employee satisfaction and the key factors driving employee loyalty towards the workplace, shows that in Kuwait, 43 percent of current employees feel 'very loyal' to their current employer, while 14 percent feel 'somewhat loyal'. More than half (62%) of employees would recommend their company as a good workplace to others and 78 percent of employees feel proud when talking about their company's products and services.

The new survey by Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading career site shows that 63 percent of the employees in the region have been working with their current company for four years or more, and over three in five of the employees are satisfied with their current employers.

High levels of loyalty and engagement can also result in improved financial performance for businesses. A whopping 92 percent of

employees feel highly engaged in their daily work and 44 percent will stay in their current organization for a long time even though other companies might offer them better salaries.

In terms of benefits to business, engaged and loyal employees are more productive, creative, and lead to reduced costs. Better work quality (83%), increased productivity (73%) and going the extra mile (65%) are some of the top perceived benefits of employee loyalty, according to survey data.

Elaborating on the survey results, Director of Human Resources at Bayt.com, Ola Haddad, said: "According to our latest survey, employers are investing in technology and training to ensure that employees have the necessary resources to be successful in their roles. It is also essential for organizations to acknowledge the significance of employee recognition programs, as it can lead to higher job satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, offering competitive salary and benefits packages can attract and retain top talent in

the industry." The latest research highlights that having an employee engagement strategy gives employers a competitive advantage in recruiting, retaining and engaging employees. Basic salary (57%), additional benefits offered by the company (39%) and employee-job fit (31%) are the top three factors perceived to impact employee loyalty the most.

The survey also showed that employees want their employers to develop a positive culture. Lack of trust in the management of the current employer (60%) is the top reason for not feeling loyal towards the company. This is followed by the lack of job security with (43%) of the employees saying so.

When asked about what employers can do to increase loyalty among their employees, a higher proportion of the respondents believe that rewards/recognition (50%), creating growth opportunities for the employees (51%) and providing benefits (52%) are some of the major factors that can create an impact.



Consistently disregarding employee suggestions (46%), heavy workload at all times/unequal distribution of work (51%), lack of open communication with direct managers (52%) and lack of opportunities to grow (48%) are some of the top perceived catalysts that can cause damage to employee's loyalty.

Spanish Embassy organizes musical concert

Spanish Embassy in collaboration with the National Council of Culture, organized a musical evening at the Kuwait National Library on 15 May. The event was graced with the presence of Dr. Muhammad Al-Jassar, Assistant Secretary-General for the Antiquities and Museums Sector in the Council.

The evening served as a platform for cultural convergence, bringing people together through the universal language of music while introducing Spanish culture to the Gulf region. The event featured two renowned Spanish musicians Armando Orbon on the guitar and Lorena Fernandez on the violin.

Addressing the attendees, the Ambassador of Spain H.E. Miguel Moro Aguilar, extended a warm welcome and expressed his gratitude to all the attendees. He noted that Spain is a culturally rich and diverse country that shares historical ties and relationships with various cultures and languages around the world, and that Spain was keen on enhancing cultural relations with Kuwait.

Expressing his delight at the reunion of Orbon and Fernandez in Kuwait, the ambassador praised Fernandez's violin mastery and added that Orbon has toured over 100 countries, captivating audiences with his extraordinary guitar skills. He conveyed his heartfelt wishes for the duo's musical performance and hoped it would leave a lasting impression on the audience.

The duo then took the stage, where they performed 'L'encouragement', a piece by classical guitarist Fernando Sur from Catalonia, showcasing their expertise in handling the guitar and violin. Orbon followed with his own composition titled 'Cancion', which demonstrated his unique style while highlighting Fernandez's remarkable violin skills. The harmonious performance of Orbon and Fernandez continued with two pieces by Brazilian guitarist Celso Machado, renowned for his concerts across Brazil, Europe, the United States, and Canada.

Speaking on the occasion, Fernandez expressed her deep affection for music as the language of the world, emphasizing its power to foster understanding and unity among people. The Spanish Embassy's initiative showcased the power of music in fostering cultural exchange



and further strengthening the bonds between Spain and Kuwait.

Addressing the media on the sidelines of the musical concert, Ambassador Aguiar stressed that people-to-people ties were important in building relations between countries. He noted that the embassy has since the start of the year issued around 8,000 visas

for citizens and residents in Kuwait to visit Spain. He added that the embassy expects the visa issuance to reach 30,000 by the end of the year.

He also highlighted that academic links are among the prominent elements of cultural exchange, especially considering that Spain has an exceptional educational system known for its efficiency and global



quality. Pointing out that every year around 100 students from Kuwait pursue academic education in various disciplines in Spain. He expressed his hope for an increase in the number of Kuwaiti students choosing Spain as a study destination, especially given that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Higher Education recognizes approximately 50 universities in Spain.

The ambassador underscored the embassy's significant focus on cultural activities and commended the fruitful cooperation between the embassy, the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature, and the National Library, which has hosted numerous Spanish cultural events that have been well received by attendees and followers.



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KAC plans to expand network around the world

Kuwait Airways has received the eighth Airbus A320neo aircraft, the *Manaqeesh*, as part of a deal that includes nine aircraft of the same type.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Ali Al-Dukhan, said the plane, which arrived from the Airbus factory in Toulouse, France, is falls within the goals pursued by the KAC as part of its strategic plan to expand its airline network around the world, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Dukhan added that the presence of the A320neo in the Kuwait Airways fleet enhances its position as a regional and global leader, stressing the keenness to continuously follow up on customer



requirements to provide the best and latest services.

He explained that with the arrival of the *Manaqeesh*, the Kuwait Airways fleet now

includes 32 aircraft, including three Airbus A330-200s, seven Airbus A200-320neo, 10 Boeing 777-300ERs, and 8 Airbus, Airbus A320neo and four Airbus A330-800.

He pointed out that Kuwait Airways has agreed with Airbus to receive six Airbus A321neo aircraft with a capacity of 169 seats and three A321neo-LR aircraft with a capacity of 169 seats in the coming years, since they are characterized by high technical specifications and modern technology.

Al-Dukhan stated that the Airbus A321neo aircraft contains additional advantages that achieve the company's goals in terms of profitability and sustainability, in addition to "significant savings" in operating costs.



Ford Middle East launches new generation 'Ranger'

Ford Middle East has unveiled a smarter and more powerful version of its popular multi-purpose pickup truck, the Ranger. The vehicle was officially launched in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 9 May and immediately piqued the interest of motoring enthusiasts and industry professionals, highlighting the growing demand for advanced and versatile pickup trucks in the region.

A day ahead of the launch, journalists and media personnel from leading print and online media in the region were invited for a special driving experience presentation of the new Ranger, and a test drive of the various models of the Ranger on the launch date. Needless to say, the gathered media were highly impressed by the remarkable versatility, distinctive capabilities and advanced features of the vehicle. Leveraging Ford's extensive experience in truck manufacturing and deep understanding of the needs of this particular segment of drivers, the company collaborated with its customers worldwide to develop a driving experience that owners of the next generation of Ranger can rely on for their work, family life, and adventures.

Featuring a fresh and bold design, the vehicle boasts a new distinctive front grille and a bolder upper sideline with wheel arches that give the Ranger added stability. For the first time, the next generation of Ranger will offer



Matrix LED headlights, while the rear lights will feature distinctive graphics.

The interior cabin provides cutting-edge technologies, including a tactile and prominent 25cm touch screen integrated with a fully digital instrument panel. Centered around the SYNC4 communication and entertainment system from Ford, the infotainment system comes ready with voice-activated communications.

Drivers can easily transition to the dedicated Ranger screen with a simple button press, providing control over various driving modes on off-road terrains. This includes monitoring the driving line, steering angles, vehicle pitch

and roll angles, and other control elements. The new electronic transmission is crucial for short-range performance and is a desirable feature among customers.

For the first time, the next generation of Ranger offers drivers a selection of driving modes that are tailored to their preferences and specific driving conditions, making it an ideal choice for various terrains. The new generation Ranger will be equipped with a full suite of Ford Co-Pilot360 advanced driver-assist technologies, providing drivers with added confidence and peace of mind on the road.

From the transmission lever to the throttle

response, traction control, stability control, ABS braking system, and more, the Ranger makes off-road driving easier. Its versatile cabin offers a blend of workspace and quiet comfort, providing intelligent and connected features for a seamless driving experience. The Ranger also offers an abundance of storage options, making it more practical than ever before.

The five models of the new generation Ranger includes the basic Ranger XL-Low, Ranger XL-High, Ranger XLT, Ranger Wildtrak, and the top-end Ranger Raptor. Engine options start from the 2.0L Single-Turbo Diesel in the XL-Low that delivers 405 Nm torque, to a choice of this engine or a 2.3L eco-boost petrol engine with 452 Nm torque, in the XL-High, the XLT and the Wildtrak. The Raptor comes with a 3.0L twin-turbo eco-boost V6 petrol engine that delivers a whopping 583 Nm torque at 3,500rpm.

Encompassing the latest advancements in technology and design makes the new Ford Ranger a powerful and appealing option in the competitive pickup truck market. And with five models to choose from, buyers can tailor their choice to the vehicle that best suits their needs and lifestyle.

The latest Ranger launch reiterates the commitment of Ford Middle East to meet the evolving needs of customers in the region by delivering innovative and reliable vehicles that enhance their daily lives and adventures.

Climate Elephants in the Room

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In fact, when it comes to helping developing countries decarbonize, considerable progress could be made simply by targeting India alone. The big advantage of this strategy is that it would avoid the paralysis associated with attempts to adopt a multilateral approach in an increasingly fragmented world.

This does not mean that we should eschew projects aimed at climate mitigation or adaptation in other countries. But we would not need to wait until everyone is on board before doing anything. Those insisting on a multilateral approach should learn from the experience of the ultimate multilateral institution: the World Trade Organization. Its

requirement that every single provision in every multilateral agreement gain unanimous support has left it increasingly paralyzed, prompting demands for institutional reform.

Of course, India is not low-hanging fruit. It is rich in coal and has little incentive (beyond the health of its citizens) to hasten the transition to green energy. In focusing on India, we would need to employ the carrot, not the stick.

Since the stick generally takes the form of pressure to implement carbon taxation, it is a non-starter.

A tax would be ineffective, because it would incite massive domestic opposition (as has been the case in the US). It would also be morally objectionable, because it is unfair to

ask a lower-middle-income country to bear the burden of reducing CO2 emissions when rich countries (like the US) have failed to do the same. Moreover, even if China and India are now two of the world's biggest polluters, they bear little responsibility for the past cumulative emissions that led to the current climate crisis.

That leaves the carrot, which would come in the form of tax incentives or subsidies to support green energy. When paired with other policies, these can ease firms into adapting to higher environmental standards (such as those associated with a cap-and-trade program). But such policies are expensive, which means that tackling climate change will require richer countries to help finance them. Whether or not

India becomes the new China, it is still in our power to ensure that it does not become the new outside polluter.



Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg

Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg, a former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the *American Economic Review*, is Professor of Economics at Yale University.

Customs clearance needed to carry gold bars

In line with prevailing customs law on carrying gold bars and excess precious jewelry out of the country, citizens and residents in Kuwait are required to obtain customs clearance a day ahead of their travel.

An announcement to this effect notes: Citizens and residents traveling abroad from Kuwait with gold bars must obtain permission from the Air Cargo Customs Department at the Kuwait International Airport one day before travel to prove ownership of the bars. The customs clearance certification will also ease customs procedures for travelers when they arrive at their destination airport.

The customs rules are reportedly being reinforced in the wake of large quantities

of gold being taken out of the country by travelers over the recent period. The customs certification will ascertain the traveler's ownership of the gold from the purchase invoice submitted as part of the export statement.

Regarding limits on the quantity that can be carried abroad, it is to be noted that any gold bars or coins, regardless of their size, small or large, must be disclosed and a statement obtained, as they are not artifacts or jewelry for personal use. Since the bars are known to be a conversion process from currency to gold, to be remonetized in another country, it must be subject to an audit process.

The audit will ensure that the gold was obtained legally and not through any illegal

means. It will also protect travelers, as the customs clearance serves as proof that the carrier disclosed these items at the point of embarkation.

Gold jewelry and other precious artifacts that women carry for personal use does not require a customs clearance provided the quantities are within reasonable limits. Anything beyond what is deemed reasonable will need customs clearance and documentation of the same.

Kuwait's unified manual for customs procedures requires acknowledging and disclosing currencies, bearer-negotiable financial instruments, precious metals or precious stones convertible into cash that exceeds permissible limits, by all travelers arriving and departing from Kuwait.



LuLu Hypermarket holds Mango Mania promotion



LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retail chain in the region, kicked-off its Mango Mania promotion, offering an enticing celebration of mangoes from 17 - 23 May at all its outlets in Kuwait. The week-long festival of the 'king of fruits' promises an unforgettable experience for mango enthusiasts across the country. The



LuLu Mango Mania was inaugurated at the LuLu Hypermarket's Qurain outlet on 17 May, by First Secretary, Political and Commerce, at the Indian Embassy, Smita Patil, in the presence of top management of LuLu Kuwait.

Held annually in summer, the Mango Mania festival at LuLu Hypermarket is a much-awaited event among shoppers in Kuwait. With over 70 varieties of mangoes sourced from 10 different countries, including the classic Indian Alphonso the Nam Dok Mai from Thailand and Philippines' own Manila mango or Carabao, the event is a veritable nirvana for mango lovers in Kuwait.

The event not only offers an extensive selection of fresh mangoes but also showcases the versatility of this tropical fruit through a wide range of mango-infused dishes, such as mango payasam, mango curries, mango cakes, pastries, mango halwa, and much more.

Spectacular displays of mangoes are a major highlight of the event, with LuLu Hypermarket transforming its outlets into a tropical paradise with captivating mango-themed creative displays and cutouts.

As part of the festivities, LuLu Hypermarket is offering amazing promotions and discounts on all varieties of mangoes. Shoppers can take advantage of special deals and offers, making it the perfect opportunity to stock up on their favorite mangoes and enjoy the sweet flavors of this beloved fruit.

One of the standout attractions of LuLu Mango Mania is the creative cutouts of mango trees, adding a touch of whimsy and charm to the event. Visitors can capture memorable photos in front of these artistic installations, creating lasting memories of their Mango Mania experience.

LuLu Hypermarket invites all citizens and residents in Kuwait to join in the Mango Mania celebration and experience the joy of indulging in the king of fruits. Do not miss this exciting opportunity to explore the diverse world of mangoes and enjoy the delightful flavors and aromas that define this tropical treasure at very special prices.



Electronics, furniture companies may stop sale of goods in installments

Major electronics and furniture companies may soon stop the sale of their goods in installments since the decision issued by the Minister of Commerce and Industry forbids these companies to increase the value of the product if sold in installment.

Reliable sources said that the companies are involved in extensive discussions to study the decision of the Minister which says the company cannot charge more for

customers who opt to pay in installments unlike those who pay cash.

The sources pointed out that the other conditions mentioned in the decision include setting a ceiling for these sales at five thousand dinars to be paid in equal monthly installments within a period not exceeding 3 years which negatively affects the revenues of electronics and furniture companies in the event they continue to sell goods for the same value in cash and in installments.



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City Centre celebrates 24 years of operations in Kuwait



City Centre, the largest retail shopping destination in Kuwait, celebrated its 24th anniversary with a grand ceremony at the Al Manara Mall outlet in Shuwaikh. The event was attended by Deputy CEO Nasser Al Ghanim, Chief Operating Officer, Ajay Goel, special guests and media personnel.

Speaking on the occasion, the deputy CEO affirmed the company's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional services and pledged to continue delivering the best shopping experiences to customers. He also revealed that plans were underway to begin a major regional expansion this year.

For his part, Mr. Goel thanked all the dedicated staff for their significant contributions to the success of City Centre over the years. He expressed his appreciation for the staff's hard work and dedication, emphasizing that the milestone achievement of 24 years would not have been possible without their relentless efforts and commitment to excellence.

The 24th anniversary promotion features discounts of up to 50 percent on all departments in all City Centre branches and includes items in grocery, cleaning products, health and beauty, household, fashion, toys and others.

The anniversary celebration serves as a



testament to City Centre's enduring success and its ability to adapt to changing consumer trends. As one of the leading shopping destinations in the region, City Centre has consistently strived to exceed customer expectations and provide a diverse range of products and services.

The event concluded with enthusiastic applause and well wishes for the continued success of City Centre. The anniversary celebration serves as a reminder of the strong foundation built by the staff and management, and their unwavering dedication to delivering excellence in the retail sector, said Nermeen Bishady, head of Marketing at City Centre.

BSK honors police officers in special ceremony



In a special ceremony, The British School of Kuwait (BSK) paid tribute to hardworking police officers from various traffic departments for their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in ensuring security and safety across Kuwait. The event also recognized the officers' vital role in regulating traffic outside the school throughout the year.

A video presented on the occasion showcased the close collaboration between the police and the school, and emphasized their joint efforts to build trust among children. Students actively participated in competitions, recited poems, provided entertainment, and delivered special performances as expressions of gratitude for the police officers who tirelessly work to keep them safe.

Chairman of BSK, Sadiq Al-Mutawa, expressed the school's desire to commemorate this occasion annually, emphasizing their deep appreciation, and recognizing the importance of the cooperation between the school and the police.

He commended the officers' strong sense of duty and praised their remarkable efficiency in maintaining security and stability throughout the country.

For his part, Assistant Head of the Hawally Traffic Department, Lieutenant Colonel Bader Al-Khalifa, expressed gratitude to the school administration for their gesture of appreciation and their commitment to organizing the annual

ceremony. He acknowledged the significance of such events in fostering a strong bond between the police force and the community they serve.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of plaques and certificates to the honored officers, symbolizing recognition for their hard work and unwavering dedication to their duties.

The event showcased the profound appreciation of BSK for the police officers' contributions in safeguarding the community. It serves as a testament to the importance of collaboration and mutual respect between educational institutions and law enforcement agencies, promoting a safer and more secure environment for all.



Al-Muzaini Exchange opens 128th and 129th branch in Kuwait

Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, the premier money exchange company in Kuwait, opened its 128th branch in Al Khaima Mall, Jahra on 9 May and its 129th outlet in Al Khairan Mall, Khairan on 11 May.

The rapid expansion reflects the company's endeavor to always be near its customers, and its commitment to providing the highest quality financial services such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange and bill payments with ease, comfort and safety and at the best prices, seven days a week.

General Manager of Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, Hugh Fernandes and the company's department managers, along with a number of the company's valued customers inaugurated the new branch in Al Khairan Mall, Khairan. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Fernandes stated: "We place immense focus in strengthening our leading position in the local market and to ensure that we provide the best financial services experience to our customers and meet all their money transfer needs. It is an incredible achievement for Al-Muzaini to have launched two new branches in Jahra and Khairan within a week, and this

emphasizes our efforts to stay true to our mission; to always be near to our customers and to add to their convenience."

The company always strives to make its financial services accessible to all. In addition to its strong network of branches, Al-Muzaini mobile app provides safe and simplified financial solutions with many features such as its availability on all digital platforms, new customer registration, the ability to add a new beneficiary and benefits from the Western Union service and Visa Direct services with simple steps to assist with transfers anywhere, anytime.

Al Muzaini is also holding an ongoing 'Mega Promotion Campaign 2023', in which anyone transferring money through the exchange company stands a chance to win a BMW X3 2023 and incredible prizes worth over \$130,000.

Send money through Al Muzaini's branches, self-service kiosks, online or the mobile app and use any of their services for a chance to win every day. Transferring through the app multiplies your chances of winning. The campaign runs from 23 March to 11 June.



SEOUL

A capital
that defines
dynamism



By Nourah Khan
Exclusive to
The Times Kuwait

Many of us got to know South Korea through Korean dramas and I admit that my admiration for Korean drama and Korean culture in general was a major reason that made me plan a trip to Seoul, the capital and largest city in South Korea.

Seoul is famous for being a city of modern skyscrapers, ancient Buddhist temples, popular culture, bustling markets, gardens, high mountains, and authentic ancient architecture. It is also the commercial and cultural center of the country, and has worked hard over the past

years to become an attractive urban model. Today, the city abounds with picturesque gardens, wide green spaces, elegant shops, trendy restaurants and cafes, and although it is a modern and technologically pioneering city, it has a vibrant cultural side. Traces of the country's ancient history and culture are reflected in the several captivating historical and archeological monuments and UNESCO World Heritage Sites that lie in and around the city.

Seoul is a city full of creativity, from fashion to food, and from architecture to art. The city includes many classic royal palaces and the famous Hwaseong Fortress, as well as the second largest covered entertainment city in the world. It is the city of Lotte games, the theme park 'Lotte World' is Disneyland of Korea, which is visited by millions of tourists every year. It is divided into indoor and outdoor places, so you can enjoy this amusement park in all four seasons, regardless of the weather, and there are many modern attractions such as the Banpo Bridge, which is located over the Han River, and is the longest fountain bridge in the world.

Seoul, Korea, is full of life, excitement, and tourist attractions, as this city combines the civilization of the past with the technology of the present, and there are many areas that tourists can go to when visiting, including:

Bukchon Heritage Village: The village contains neighborhoods



and narrow streets full of traditional Korean houses, and is popular with tourists, as some of these houses are converted into restaurants and guesthouses, while others have been converted into museums, and yet others are cultural centers that display traditional crafts and historical aspects of the city

One of the landmarks that must be visited is the Seoul Tower or the Namsan Tower, and the top is reached through the cable car from which you enjoy watching the picturesque landscapes and skyscrapers during the ascent

Seoul Tower is located on Nam Mountain in central Seoul at an altitude of 500 meters above the city of Seoul, and the visitor can see wonderful views of the entire city from the top. The tower

includes four observation floors, and these floors also include gift shops and restaurants serving French cuisine

Among the places that I was keen to visit since the first day in Seoul was Gyeongbok Palace, which was built during the era of the Joseon Dynasty. It is the largest of the palaces that were built at that time. The original palace was destroyed and rebuilt more than once during the previous centuries, and it was completely restored in the nineties.

This palace houses the National Palace Museum of Korea and the National Folk Museum of Korea. This museum displays elements from the palaces of the Joseon Dynasty through artifacts and artwork, tools used daily for cooking and cleaning, and clothes that tell the stories of the Korean people in ancient times.

And to complete the fun of the visit, I was keen to wear traditional Korean clothes called Hanbok during my visit to the palace, as there are many shops available to rent traditional clothes for tourists to take pictures in.

The Blue House is one of the places that tourists have to visit in Seoul and it was, like the White House in the United States, the executive office and official residence of the President of South Korea until 2022. It includes several buildings located within one area and built in the Korean architectural style. It was named the Blue House on account of the blue bricks employed in covering all the building. Visitors can book in advance an hour-long tour of the buildings and its premises.

There are many beautiful neighborhoods and streets in Seoul that are worth a visit, including the Itaewon neighborhood, which is among the most crowded neighborhoods in Seoul with its streets lined by shops, cafes, and consumer companies, in addition to food carts and the proliferation of street artists. So the , Itaewon neighborhood is wonderful for people who want to wander around, watch the city going about its daily life, or buy special gifts One of the beautiful areas that should be visited, especially by young people, is the 'Hongdae' area, one of the vibrant areas where you can see the culture of Korean youth. I recommend visiting it after the afternoon when young people gather in the street to dance and sing.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Central Bank Digital Currencies unburden taxpayers



Yanis Varoufakis

A former finance minister of Greece, is leader of the MeRA25 party and Professor of Economics at the University of Athens.

When First Republic Bank failed, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) organized a shotgun sale of its assets to JPMorgan Chase. That violated the FDIC's cardinal rule that no bank owning more than 10 percent of insured US deposits should be allowed to expand further by absorbing another US bank. But, because sparing taxpayers the cost of another bank bailout took precedence, the US authorities permitted, indeed helped, America's largest bank, already a too-big-to-fail (TBTF) institution, to grow even larger.

In a rare show of bipartisanship, Democrats and Republicans alike applauded the FDIC's actions, rejoicing that JPMorgan had stepped in with a 'private sector' plan to avoid burdening the taxpayers. Unfortunately, the truth was less heroic: Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan Chase's ubiquitous boss, negotiated a \$50 billion credit line and a loss-sharing deal with the FDIC that will result in a \$13 billion loss to US taxpayers. In short, the resolution of First Republic burdened Americans both with a hefty tax bill and with the larger systemic risks implicit in a bigger TBTF bank.

First Republic was small, but its fate is a harbinger of bigger things. Owing to the rise in prices and (to a lesser extent) wages, the US public debt as a share of national income shrank. But with the Federal Reserve boosting interest rates to arrest inflation, the value of Treasury bills sitting on the banks' books declined (why buy a second-hand, low-yield bond when you can buy a higher-yielding fresh one?). And since most of the safe assets held by banks are Treasury bills, bankruptcies like those of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank, and First Republic ensued.

This dynamic is unlikely to end any time soon. More banks will fail, which will help TBTF banks pose even larger systemic threats to society. Besides misleading the public that their taxes are being spared, the authorities are setting the stage for a future banking crisis, which will force an exasperated public to pay even more.



“

At the end of the day, taxpayers are fully shielded by CBDC while megabanks, like JPMorgan, are not allowed to grow even larger. In fact, Wall Street finally faces welcome competition from the Fed accounts.

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There is an alternative to the tax-funded absorption of small banks like First Republic by megabanks like JPMorgan. And it would not shift the cost of backing uninsured deposits to the taxpayer: Fed deposit accounts or, equivalently, the gradual rollout of a Fed-issued digital dollar.

Consider how a US central bank digital currency, or CBDC, would have worked out in the case of First Republic. Instead of having the FDIC guarantee the bank's deposits with taxpayer money, the Fed creates digital accounts (or wallets) for First Republic's depositors and credits their balance to them. Depositors can keep the money in their new Fed account, making payments from it using a username and PIN provided by the Fed, or

transfer the balance to any other bank account.

While on their Fed account, their deposits are de facto guaranteed by the Fed without any need to burden taxpayers or levy charges to other banks. If the Fed is worried that, by boosting the money supply, the associated increase in its balance sheet will be inflationary, it can sterilize the new money by selling an equivalent value of some of the mountain of assets (such as mortgages and bonds) it already owns.

At the end of the day, taxpayers are fully shielded while megabanks, like JPMorgan, are not allowed to grow even larger. In fact, Wall Street finally faces welcome competition from the Fed accounts, forcing them to raise their game.

I imagine outraged opponents of CBDCs rushing to their keyboards to denounce me for aiding Big Brother's nefarious effort to gain control over citizens' every transaction. But they are barking up the wrong tree. Digital money is already here, increasingly eradicating cash payments. At the drop of a hat, the IRS, the FBI, and even local police have instant access to our payments. Justin Trudeau, the Canadian prime minister, did not need a CBDC to freeze the bank accounts of protesting anti-vaccination truckers. Banks and Big Tech are regularly cutting off, or refusing to trade with, people whose views are deemed inappropriate.

In other words, we already live in a techno-feudal society where we need to ask our bank, and indirectly our government, for permission to pay. Our digital payments can be centrally interdicted by credit card companies, banks, bureaucrats, and other unaccountable, opaque intermediaries.

Perhaps counterintuitively, CBDCs can enhance citizens' privacy relative to the status quo and shield us from exorbitantly centralized power. Checks and balances can be introduced based on two separate and siloed data-management systems.

The system that manages Fed accounts can be made totally anonymous (just as crypto accounts are anonymous and identified by a long string of numbers) while a separate system supervised by relevant authorities can check for illicit activity such as tax evasion and money laundering. Thus, a proper and democratically controlled CBDC rollout can bring the combined benefits of strengthening tax collection, fighting deflation, and enhancing protection against Big Brother (and his many little brothers). So, why so much venom against CBDCs by those untroubled by the surveillance and control already exercised over us by Wall Street-controlled digital money? Who is really afraid of CBDCs?

Once upon a time, the greed of tobacco companies was channeled through libertarian outrage over the restriction of smokers' freedom to choose cancer. This time, the outrage is serving the interests of bankers panicking at the prospect of Fed accounts. Dimon and other masters of the TBTF universe are right to be scared, because a Fed CBDC would threaten their empire building. And bankers around the world are right to fear that many of their lucrative services would no longer be required. With those services — holding deposits, processing payments, and so on — 'disintermediated', they would suddenly be unable to hold societies hostage.

Seoul, a capital that defines dynamism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

There are many shops in the area that sell Korean products and clothes, in addition to restaurants, cafes and karaoke shops. One of the distinctive night tours is a ship tour of the Han River, to see the city and its beauty at night from the river. There are many companies that provide such tours, but you must book in advance. And if you are a fan of shopping in traditional markets, be sure to visit the Insadong Street Market. The market has a Korean folk market where you can buy souvenirs, traditional clothes, green tea and traditional sweets. One of the essential things that should be in your

schedule is also a visit to one of the traditional tea houses.

When you visit South Korea, you will be amazed at the number of traditional tea houses and houses spread across every side of Korea, which offer tea with special rituals. Korean tea is closely related to the principles of Asian medicine, which say that food and medicine are intertwined and that good food alone can be good medicine for a person. The tea house serves some traditional Korean sweets and the famous rice cakes with tea.

Seoul is a very safe country for visiting and tourism, as it is characterized by low crime rates and violent crime rarely occurs. Today, there are

many halal restaurants in the capital, some of which offer Jordanian food, such as the Petra Restaurant, and some of which offer Arabic take-out in general, such as the Arabesque Restaurant and the Dubai Restaurant, as well as Arab cafes that offer hookah.

You will not have any problem communicating with the Korean people, as everyone speaks English fluently, in addition to the fact that the Korean people are very friendly and love to help and very much accept differences.

Shopping in Seoul is a special pleasure, especially for women who are looking for beauty products. Korean cosmetic products are known for their high quality and low prices, in addition

to the presence of many huge shopping malls that contain international brands such as the Hyundai Mall, which includes the most famous brands and upscale restaurants in the city.

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

Finding Solitude In Salalah



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

Salalah, located in the southern region of Oman, is a hidden gem waiting to be explored, with its unique combination of pristine beaches, lush greenery, and historic architecture. Known for its stunning beaches which stretch as far as the eye can see — the crystal clear waters of the Arabian Sea combined with the white sand make it a paradise for beach lovers across the globe. The most popular beaches in Salalah include Al Mughsail Beach, which is known for its stunning natural rock formations and blowholes, and Al Fizayah Beach, which is perfect for swimming and snorkeling.

When it comes to accommodation, there are several great hotels to consider along the seaside. Leading the way in sustainability across luxury resorts in the Gulf is the stunning Al Baleed Resort by Anantara. Built between a beach and a freshwater lagoon, the beachfront



Andrea Orru
General Manager
Al Baleed Resort

resort has been designed in harmony with nature, raising the bar for other hotels in Oman without compromising on the unique culture and identity of the city.

From the moment you pass through the stunning entrance arches which embrace the beauty of Islamic architecture, and are handed the welcome drink of rose water and frankincense, one is almost guaranteed a relaxing stay ahead. The use of symmetry is also an important feature throughout the grounds with raised black-stone water features mimicking the ancient falaj irrigation system running towards important focal points, the ocean and the lagoon.

In earlier times, the villages surrounding Salalah featured a majestic main fort surrounded by the village houses below which formed a myriad of fascinating paths and alleyways. The façades of their mud brick walls also formed the village boundary, punctuated by an imposing wooden entrance gate. Al Baleed Resort has taken this concept to recreate a village-like atmosphere, exuding a sense of days gone by. Behind striking carved wooden

doors, the white-washed main building houses the reception and lobby, Sakalan restaurant, and 30 guest rooms boasting incredible sea views. Dotted amongst 691 coconut palms lie the 88 pool villas with traditional flat roofs, private entrances, and intimate courtyards, widely spread out for privacy and comfort.

"Our guests are mainly from Germany, the UK, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Oman. During the Khareef season (June – August) we are welcoming guests from UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman. Our resort is an ideal destination for couples and families," explains General Manager at Al Baleed Resort, Andrea Orru.

Spa lovers will thoroughly enjoy the Anantara Spa where detoxifying treatments using local ingredients such as frankincense are used to relax the mind, body, and soul through traditional rituals at Oman's only luxury hammam spa. A salt scrub and frankincense oil massage is the ideal choice before wandering along the property's sandy beach or before slipping into the warm waters of the infinity pool that runs through the center of the property.

It is also nice to know when enjoying such luxury that you are also helping to heal the environment. The hotel is committed to achieving zero waste and removing single-use plastics from the property and has changed to glass bottles and biodegradable straws since early 2020. Wooden key cards have also been in use for over two years. Guests will find environmentally friendly pens and slippers in their rooms and villas, and a concerted effort is being made to establish 100 percent paper-free guest communication. Villa hosts use iPads for guest management, and digital screens have replaced printed advertisements at the resort.



To live in harmony with the resort's surroundings while connecting guests to the destination, local produce is used throughout the resort. Vegetables are grown in the chef's garden and others are sourced from the



Royal Razat Farm in Salalah. "We support our community through grassroots involvement, as well as matching guest donations to organizations that provide vital services, such as child welfare and wildlife protection. In every decision, we are driven by sustainable hospitality," adds Orru.

Another great place to stay in Salalah is the adults-only Juweira Boutique Hotel in Hawana. Designed by famed Egyptian architect Adel Mokhtar the property focuses on delivering a personalized service to grown-up guests. Located meters from the beach in an all-inclusive Rotana concept, the façade is made up of an understated fusion of traditional Arabian architecture and contemporary lines. Dining and entertainment options at the hotel vary from traditional local delicacies to locally sourced seafood. The dining restaurant, Al Manara, is set directly on the waterfront with large windows overlooking the marina. Alternatively, Sammak is located just across the bridge and offers traditional cuisine. Outdoor seating means guests can enjoy a romantic seafood dinner under the stars.

For travelers looking for a digital detox, the Souly Lodge offers bungalows right on the beach. Originally set up with just a handful of Bedouin tents, the property now has 21 spacious wooden ensuite bungalows. Built using local materials, the eco-property also uses solar power systems as much as possible in addition to providing organic products for its guests.

For those who love to explore the local

culture and the great outdoors, make sure to stop by the Museum of the Frankincense Land which showcases the history and importance of frankincense in the region. You can also learn about the ancient trade routes and see how the resin is harvested. It is also worthwhile exploring the Al Baleed Archaeological Park which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that dates back to the 12th century and the Al Husn Souq. This traditional Omani market is a great place to experience the local culture and purchase traditional crafts, spices, and clothing. Other activities which should not be missed according to locals are the dolphin-watching tours, and a hike up the Samhan Mountain Range for stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

So whether you are looking for a short break close by or just want to escape to one of the very few untouched parts of the world, Salalah is a unique city that should be on every traveler's bucket list. So pack your bags, grab your sunscreen, and get ready to explore this hidden gem in Oman.

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





EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Listening to Arab Youth



Jihad Azour

A former Lebanese finance minister, he is Director of the International Monetary Fund's Middle East and Central Asia Department.

Optimism can be difficult to muster at a time of heightened uncertainty and global turmoil. The 2022 ASDA/BCW Arab Youth Survey, conducted only a few months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflected a darkening economic outlook. Rapidly rising commodity prices and supply-chain disruptions were fueling inflation worldwide, and higher food prices were straining low-income households and undermining food security in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Not much has changed in the year since. Despite some easing since the end of 2022, price pressures remain stubbornly high; this year, inflation is expected to average around 15 percent in the Arab world. Many of the region's central banks continued tightening monetary policy to prevent inflation expectations from de-anchoring. Coupled with turbulence in global financial markets and increased policy uncertainty, this could dampen economic activity for the foreseeable future. Given this context, it is no surprise that rising living costs and unemployment were the most pressing concerns for young Arabs. The 2022 survey covered five Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia), and the Levant (Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria, and Yemen), where stark disparities in income and wealth remain.

This year, 41 percent of respondents reported struggling to pay their expenses in full, up from 37 percent in 2021. This share is much higher in the Levant, where 63 percent of the young people surveyed were unable to meet their basic financial obligations.

Moreover, this year's survey highlighted how young Arabs' concerns about education and unemployment dimmed their hopes for the future. About 83 percent of respondents were worried about the quality of education in their country. And, while only 15 percent of the youth population in GCC countries said it would be difficult to find a job, that share was 55 percent

transfers to the most vulnerable segments of the population, though governments should resist the temptation to reintroduce or expand subsidies and trade restrictions. Meanwhile, survey responses point to a two-pronged approach to tackling the lack of jobs: fighting corruption and nepotism and improving the education system. Both require policymakers to implement long-term reforms.

While it is important to help young people gain skills that are attractive to current and future employers, governments should also provide entrepreneurial support for young Arabs hoping to start and grow their own

threat posed by climate change. The Arab world relies heavily on food imports, making supplies and prices vulnerable to severe weather events in other parts of the world. Policymakers must take decisive measures to ensure food security, such as investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, using water more efficiently, and improving the management of food stocks and supply chains at the national level. Greater investment in clean-energy technologies could also deliver comparative advantages (by reducing the emissions produced by industrial exports), accelerate the diversification of the region's economies, and create jobs.

The IMF is committed to supporting the MENA region through financing, having already allocated \$53.8 billion to Arab countries since the start of the pandemic, together with assistance for capacity development and policy advice. The Fund is also enhancing its lending toolkit to help countries better cope with new crises and challenges. To help address the urgent food crisis facing its most vulnerable members, the IMF has introduced a one-year lending window, which, as of April 2023, has benefited six countries with a total of \$1.9 billion. That scheme is complemented by the IMF's new resilience and sustainability trust, which supports low-income and middle-income countries in addressing long-term challenges, including climate change and future pandemics.

While the most recent survey of young Arabs ultimately presents a positive picture, with many convinced that their best days lie ahead, it also suggests an ever-growing battle between optimism and pessimism, particularly when it comes to the economy. One hopes that with the support of international organizations like the IMF, the next survey will show a renewed sense of confidence, inspired by improved economic conditions. Hope for a better future must continue to be nurtured, even, or especially, in turbulent times.

“While it is important to help young people gain skills that are attractive to current and future employers, governments should also provide entrepreneurial support for young Arabs hoping to start and grow their own business.”

in North Africa and 73 percent in the Levant.

The most encouraging finding was growing interest in entrepreneurship. More young Arabs expressed the desire to start a business and work for themselves, while the traditional allure of government jobs appears to be waning (except, perhaps, in the GCC countries). This shift will help drive economic dynamism and boost growth, which could translate into more opportunities for future generations.

In response to these findings, policymakers should focus on addressing the cost-of-living crisis and generating more and better employment opportunities. Shielding households from rising prices will require targeted measures, such as temporary cash

business. Beyond offering more training, this means removing barriers to market entry, increasing transparency in the provision of public goods and services, and broadening access to credit.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently highlighted the importance of stepping up digitalization and investing in new technologies in the MENA region. This would help young men and women take full advantage of the new job opportunities associated with remote work, online learning, digital finance, and e-commerce. At the same time, digitalization will improve access to and delivery of social-protection services.

Finally, the survey results underscore the



Making vaccine potency last longer

Immunization has saved millions of lives ever since vaccination was discovered more than 200 years ago. Today, vaccines provide protection from more than 20 life-threatening diseases, helping people of all ages live longer, healthier lives. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), immunization currently prevents nearly five million deaths every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza and measles.

Despite the primacy of vaccines in global healthcare, its use and availability are not equal worldwide, as demonstrated during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Compounding this vaccination coverage problem is the fact that vaccines also differ in the lasting power or their potency, with some vaccines offering life-long protection, others for multiple years, and yet others that only last months and require booster doses to retain their potency.

Developing vaccines with long-lasting potency to protect against infectious diseases has stimulated research in many countries. Researchers at Monash University in Australia, who have been studying how the body creates long-lasting antibodies against illnesses, reported that their latest findings provide a better understanding of how immunity is maintained long-term within the body. The study could help revolutionize the immunization process by making it possible to develop longer-lasting vaccines.

Immunologists explain that after a bacteria or virus invades the body they multiply rapidly causing infection and disease. The body's immune system uses white blood cells to respond to these attacks by creating antibodies that fight back the infection.

Following an infection, the immune system remembers what it learned about how to protect the body against that specific disease.

If your body encounters the same germ again, the white blood cells recognize it and quickly produce antibodies that fight and immunize the body to that infection. Vaccines provide immunization to certain diseases by imitating an infection and thereby helping teach the immune system how to fight off a future infection from a disease. Vaccines work by displaying our immune system to only the most essential aspects of a bacteria or virus, either the outer protein covering of a germ or another protein made by the germ. Antibodies are then produced in the body to fight these germs and to create immunity and protection against illness.

Vaccines that last the longest are attenuated vaccines, which use a weakened form of the pathogen to help create immunity. These vaccines allow an individual to get the experience of the infection and the immune response to that infection but without exposure to the full-strength virus. While attenuated vaccines tend to be the most long-lasting, there are other options, such as vaccines that use individual proteins from the virus instead of a live virus to help create an immune response. While this is an effective vaccine, the immune



response tends to be shorter-lasting in comparison to attenuated vaccines.

However, vaccine immunity is compromised if the disease causing germ mutates, or changes a portion of its protein constituents. While germs that cause some diseases do not mutate, meaning that if you have immunized yourself to these diseases you have immunity from it for life, others mutate often. For example, germs that cause measles, polio, and smallpox are very stable — they do not mutate over time and therefore once you get infected with the disease, or immunized through vaccines, you develop lifelong immunity.

However, this is not the case with germs that cause respiratory infections

such as influenza, RSV, or COVID-19, which can mutate quickly through subtle changes in their proteins, rendering them immune to previous vaccines or infections. It is because of these mutations that people need to take booster doses or new vaccines. The ability to create vaccines that provide long-term immunity is the holy Grail for vaccinologists.

The new study could help scientists identify the part of the virus or bacteria that cannot or does not change. After identifying this portion scientists can then create one-time vaccines that last longer and do not require boosters when the germs mutate. Another stumbling block in effective immunization is that antibodies created in the body can last anywhere from months to decades, creating a variability of immune response and longevity.

By studying the cells within the body that, as a response to vaccines, create an antibody shield, the scientists were able to understand what allows these antibody-producing cells to last as long as they do. They found evidence of markers that indicate the longevity of an antibody-producing cell. But this study was only part of the answer to developing long-lasting vaccines.

New research links longer phone usage to higher BP

New findings from an extensive study of data on more than 200,000 people indicate that the time a person spends talking on the mobile phone could have a bearing on their risk of high blood pressure (BP).

The latest findings, published in 'Digital Health', the European Heart Journal hypertension, examined data from the UK Biobank — a national biorepository of biological samples and data for use in research. High blood pressure, medically known as hypertension, is linked to several negative health outcomes, including heart failure, heart attack, atrial fibrillation and stroke risk. The researchers analyzed the follow up data from participants who were asked questions about their cell phone usage and how much time they spend on the phone making or receiving calls each day. The study team found a strong correlation between higher cell phone usage and new cases of high blood pressure, even after taking into consideration other factors such as genetic risk for high blood pressure.



The researchers looked at the responses from people who were on their phone for about 30-59 minutes, 1-3 hours, 4-6 hours or more than 6 hours per week. They found that the more time people were on the phone every week, the higher the chance they would have hypertension. People on the phone about 30-59 minutes a week had an 8 percent increased risk for hypertension. People on the phone 1-3 hours had a 13 percent increased risk, while those on the phone 4 to 6 hours had a 16 percent increased risk and those on the phone over 6 hours every week had a 25 percent increased risk of high blood pressure.

The team also looked at if holding your phone in your hand or using a hands free device was connected to hypertension risk. But they found that the use of hands-free devices did not make for a significant shift in levels of new cases of high blood pressure.

The findings suggest that talking on a mobile for less than half an hour a week may not affect the risk of developing high blood pressure. The researchers hope that their study will help people make healthier choices now, and lead to new findings in the future.

Experts reviewing the latest study said while the findings are certainly interesting, more research will be needed to replicate the results, and before physicians can recommend curtailing phone calls for patients suffering from heart ailments. But until more research is available on the matter, it would be prudent to minimize phone calls.

Other data correlations from the study showed that participants who reported using a cell phone for less than half an hour each week were also found to have a higher level of education, were more likely to engage in high levels of physical activity, and tended to have a higher income level as well. People who spend more time on their phone were also more likely to be smokers. Researchers clarified that their study had a few shortcomings and that more in-depth research would be needed to draw firm conclusions. Among the limitations that the study team reported were that the average participant in the study was white, middle-aged or older, and above the average health level of the British population. For another, the nature of the data makes it difficult to directly connect just the length of phone calls and the amount of cell phone usage with hypertension.

More research is also required to study the health impacts of extended phone time on younger people, including children in order to make recommendations on whether cell phone usage times need to be reduced, said the research team.



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Half a Century of Animal Liberation Is Not Enough

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Peter Singer

Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, is Founder of the charity, *The Life You Can Save*. His new book, *Animal Liberation Now* will be released in North America on May 23, and in other countries in early June.

Fifty years ago, my first article arguing that it is wrong to treat animals as we do appeared in *The New York Review of Books*. Two years later my book *Animal Liberation* was published, subsequently to be credited with triggering the modern animal-rights movement.

Animal Liberation contains both ethical arguments and factual descriptions of what we do to animals. The ethical arguments have stood up well to nearly 50 years of discussion. Similar perspectives are now supported by many philosophers, including those who hold views that are very different from my own utilitarian position: Christine Korsgaard, a Kantian; feminist philosophers like Carol Adams, Alice Cary, and Lori Gruen; Mark Rowlands, who takes a social contract view of animal rights; and Martha Nussbaum, who is closer to Aristotle.

On the other hand, the factual descriptions in *Animal Liberation* of what we do to animals have long ceased to capture current conditions



accurately. So, 18 months ago, I started a complete update and revision of the book, which will be published this month under the title *Animal Liberation Now*.

In writing what is, in effect, a new book on our treatment of animals, I could not avoid the question: have we made progress in our attitudes toward animals, and our treatment of them, since 1975?

Many people are concerned about cruelty to animals, but focus on how we treat our companion animals, especially cats and dogs, who number about 840 million worldwide. That number is dwarfed by the approximately 200 billion

vertebrate animals raised for food in appalling conditions in factory farms. In any objective assessment of the lives, and deaths, of animals under human control, the welfare of intensively farmed animals far outweighs the significance of how we treat our companion animals. Of these vertebrate animals raised for food in close confinement, about 124 billion are fish. There is now strong evidence that fish can feel pain, and there is no justification for ignoring that pain.

Moreover, difficult as it may be to conceive of 124 billion individual fish, the total number of fish who suffer because of intensive fish farming is even greater. An estimated 460 billion-1.1 trillion fish are hauled out of the ocean every year, ground up into fishmeal, and fed to carnivorous fish. A typical farmed salmon has eaten 147 fish before it is itself killed.

After fish, chickens are the most consumed vertebrate: about 70 billion are raised and killed each year, typically in large sheds containing about 20,000 birds each. Today's chickens are bred to grow so fast that their immature leg bones cannot easily support their weight, causing them chronic pain for the last fifth of their lives.

For that reason, John Webster, an emeritus professor at the University of Bristol who is also a veterinarian and a widely respected expert on the welfare of farmed animals, has described modern intensive chicken production as "the single most severe, systematic example of man's inhumanity to another sentient animal." (For my part, I find it hard to say whether intensive fish farming or intensive chicken farming is worse.)

Because of the growth and further intensification of animal production, humans inflict more suffering on animals today than they did in 1975. Nevertheless, the trend since 1975 is not all negative. The idea that animals should have rights has gone from being ridiculed to being widely held. In many countries, safeguarding animal welfare is seen as an important government responsibility.

In Europe, reforms have reduced the suffering of hundreds of millions of animals raised for food or used in research. It is now illegal in the 27 countries of the European Union and in the United Kingdom to keep egg-laying hens in the standard bare wire cages that, in 1975, prevented nearly all hens from spreading their wings fully or laying their eggs in the nest that hens instinctively seek if given the opportunity. The same countries also prohibit keeping breeding sows and veal calves in individual crates that prevent them from turning around or moving more than a single step.

Regrettably, most other parts of the world lag behind Europe in this respect. That includes the United States, where, in the absence of any federal legislation to regulate how farmed animals can be raised, billions of them still live in conditions that have not improved over the past 50 years.

Then there is China, which 50 years ago produced relatively few intensively farmed animals but is now the world's leading producer of pigs and a huge producer of chickens. To

increase production even further, China is now building massive skyscraper 'farms', 26 stories high and totaling 800,000 square meters, all to be filled with closely confined pigs.

Mahatma Gandhi said that "the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." By that standard, there are no truly great or morally progressive nations yet. Should focus on addressing the cost-of-living crisis and generating more and better employment opportunities. Shielding households from rising prices will require targeted measures, such as temporary cash transfers to the most vulnerable segments of the population, though governments should resist the temptation to reintroduce or expand subsidies and trade restrictions. Meanwhile, survey responses point to a two-pronged approach to tackling the lack of jobs: fighting corruption and nepotism and improving the education system. Both require policymakers to implement long-term reforms.

While it is important to help young people gain skills that are attractive to current and future employers, governments should also provide entrepreneurial support for young Arabs hoping to start and grow their own business. Beyond offering more training, this means removing barriers to market entry, increasing transparency in the provision of public goods and services, and broadening access to credit.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently highlighted the importance of stepping up digitalization and investing in new technologies in the MENA region. This would help young men and women take full advantage of the new job opportunities associated with remote work, online learning, digital finance, and e-commerce. At the same time, digitalization will improve access to and delivery of social-protection services.

Finally, the survey results underscore the threat posed by climate change. The Arab world relies heavily on food imports, making supplies and prices vulnerable to severe weather events in other parts of the world. Policymakers must take decisive measures to ensure food security, such as investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, using water more efficiently, and improving the management of food stocks and supply chains at the national level. Greater investment in clean-energy technologies could also deliver comparative advantages (by reducing the emissions produced by industrial exports), accelerate the diversification of the region's economies, and create jobs.

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