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Kuwait share
a similar vision

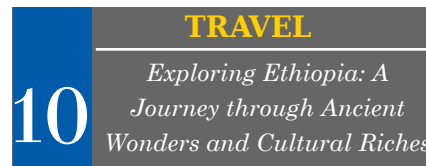
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Job skills empower youth, enhance productivity



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

World Youth Skills Day celebrated each year on 15 July recognizes the importance and potential of youth as catalysts of change, and commits to providing them with the skills and opportunities to enhance their productivity and drive innovation that helps develop a sustainable economy and a prosperous nation.

Rapid technological advancements and shifting labor market dynamics requires an agile workforce equipped with adaptable skill sets. This will necessitate policy- and decision-makers to introduce and implement strategies and plans designed to empower young nationals in the workforce with relevant skills and training that equip them to become more productive, grow professionally in their chosen



fields, and contribute to the national economy. Additionally, governments will have to

prioritize skill development opportunities for young people who are currently not in

education, employment or training through technological and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and centers that offer skills development programs. This will enable fresh graduates to hone their latent abilities and innovative skills so as to become more effective and productive components of the labor market.

But, in order to craft effective national policies that improve productivity, encourage innovation, and create an innovative young workforce, the relevant authorities will need to first understand what drives productivity gains, recognize the challenges that hinder productivity growth, and adopt factors that enhance productivity performance in the labor force to drive sustainable economic growth. Improving productivity and encouraging innovation are two critical elements in the economic growth of a country.

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Finance Minister quits over KIA affiliation

Less than a month after assuming office, the Minister of Finance Manaf Al Hajri tendered his resignation to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, allegedly over disagreements within the cabinet over the transfer of affiliation of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

In his resignation letter, Minister Al-Hajri had reportedly underlined that "the shift in affiliation of KIA, from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Economic

and Investment Affairs caused a state of confusion and lack of clarity among a number of concerned public entities, and which prompted them to address the concerned authorities seeking clarity on affiliations within each ministry.

Resignation of Al-Hajri, who is known for his competence, high professionalism, and his ability to deal with thorny financial files, and his expertise in economic affairs, shocked the economic and financial circles in the country.

In his role as finance minister, Al Hajri was expected to carry out the unenvious



task of implementing radical economic and financial reforms. He was also widely expected to bridge the deficit and form a sustainable annual budget that enhances the strength of the state's public finances and preserves prosperity for future generations.

For its part, the Council of Ministers had decided to maintain the affiliation of the Kuwait Investment Authority with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Sa'ad Al-Barrak, and not to return it to the Minister of Finance.



Jazeera Airways now flies direct to Islamabad

Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline has now started direct flights to Islamabad. By adding Pakistan's capital city to its growing list of destinations, Jazeera now flies to three cities in the country, including Karachi and Lahore. One way fares to Islamabad will be KD 49 while a return ticket will be priced at KD 99.

Islamabad, also known as the 'Green City' is the capital of Pakistan. A well-planned, structured and cosmopolitan city, it is filled with interesting tourist attractions. This includes the Faisal Mosque, South Asia's largest mosque, Daman-i-Koh, Margalla Zoo, Pakistan Monument, Shakarparian, Lok Virsa Museum and the Rawal lake view point. The popular hill station Murree is a short drive away from Islamabad as are Abbottabad and Bhurban.

There are close to 130,000 Pakistani nationals living in Kuwait. By connecting directly to Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, Jazeera Airways

offers these expats convenient and affordable flights to visit their home country.

Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, Rohit Ramachandran, said "Islamabad is the third city in Pakistan that Jazeera Airways connects with direct flights. While staying focused on growing our network, we continue to offer more cost effective options for both tourists and expats from Kuwait to reach different cities. By making travel more accessible, we hope to encourage tourism to Pakistan while also giving Pakistani nationals the opportunity to visit their home country more often."

Jazeera Airways operates a network of 64 cities across the Middle East, Europe, Central and North Asia as well as Africa. To book your next flight to any of these destinations, you can visit the airline's website (www.jazeeraairways.com), or the Jazeera app.

Flight Number	Frequency	From	To	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
J9 0511	Tuesday, Saturday	Kuwait	Islamabad	23:05	04:50
J9 0512	Wednesday, Sunday	Islamabad	Kuwait	05:40	07:40

Coops reject increases in price of goods

Head of the Union of Cooperative Societies, Abdel Wahhab Mashari Al-Faris, emphasized the importance of not raising the prices of goods in cooperative societies, Al-Qabas reported. The official stressed in a press statement their commitment to the directives of the Ministers of Affairs and Trade and the decision of the Ministry of Commerce to prohibit price increases. He further noted that any association that violates these ministerial decisions will face legal accountability for their decision-makers.

Al-Faris clarified that they have rejected proposals to raise prices for 45 items and have refused to introduce 245 new items due to their higher prices compared to the current market rates. He said that the ongoing media campaign on social networking sites is incorrect, pointing



out that the union will not support the price increase unless the ban is lifted by the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Affairs agrees, and inflation rates decrease based on data approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

The union head further disclosed that a price committee was formed in the federation to review 315 requests and examine 1,350 items from 30 May 2023, until date.

Eradicating drug usage a social priority

The government and people of Kuwait are committed to eradicating the scourge of drug usage, eliminating their harmful effects, supporting addicts to overcome their addiction, and safeguarding the nation's youth from this social threat, said Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs, and Childhood, Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah. He made these comments while addressing the inaugural social, scientific forum last week.

The forum, held under the banner of 'Towards a safe society away from drugs' was organized by the ministry's Department of Juvenile Welfare. In his speech, the minister emphasized the importance of collaboration and dedication in efforts to counter schemes that targeted the youth of the country and minimize social harm.

Minister Firas emphasized the ministry's keenness to raise awareness on the perils of drugs by conducting informative lectures and campaigns among youth while partnering with the Ministry of Education to educate the youth and to encourage them to steer clear of harmful substances.



Al-Sabah called for concerted efforts to address the issue from all aspects, and for cooperation with all government agencies, including the Ministries of Interior and Justice, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministries of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Information. He added that tackling the issue of drug abuse necessitates a comprehensive approach, which entails raising awareness about its dangers and fostering a deeper understanding of the subject. Furthermore, it requires providing assistance and support to those who have become addicted to drugs to help overcome their addiction.

Lion cubs found abandoned on the street

Breeders and pet owners of banned exotic predatory animals who smuggle these animals to Kuwait directly or through agents are often unaware or unmindful of the dangers they pose to other people, or of the illegality of keeping and owning such predatory animals, besides not knowing how to properly care for these animals.

When these animals fall sick or are in dire straits, the owners heartlessly abandon them on the streets.

The issue of illegally keeping and breeding predatory animals in the country was once again brought to light last week with seven lion cubs found wandering in the streets, weak, sick and struggling for survival.

It is quite probable that these lion cubs were smuggled into the country illegally when they were still suckling and needed mother's care. The callous behavior of pet smugglers and their buyers in the country not only put these animals at risk of death from poor, inadequate and inappropriate care and handling, but they also pose a danger when released on the streets to pedestrians passing by and to children playing in the neighborhood.

Teams from the Environment Public Authority and the Ministry of Interior reportedly immediately arrived at the scene, captured with reports of attacks by these cubs on people, seized them, and transferred them directly to the zoo to be referred for medical care.



Nouf Al-Badr, a veterinarian responsible for these cubs at the zoo, told Al-Qabas that "the operation is more therapeutic than a rescue, as the cubs were weak, because they were not able to breastfeed enough from their mothers to strengthen their bodies."

She added, "There were 7 cubs in the zoo, in dire need of care, given that they are about five months old. She disclosed breeders are unaware of the law that prevents breeding of predatory animals in Kuwait."

She went on to say, "As soon as the animal becomes weak or sick, the breeders get rid of it, or at other times they remove its claws and fangs to protect their children. This is cruelty against animals."



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France and Kuwait share a similar vision

Embassy celebrates National Day with gala reception



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

French Ambassador H.E. Claire Le Flecher held a gala reception at her residence on 12 July to mark the National Day of France. A large gathering of diplomats and distinguished guests attended the celebrations, which commemorates the 14 July 1789 historic storming of the Bastille fortress that marked the beginning of the French revolution.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Ambassador Le Flecher expressed her gratitude to the chief guest of the evening, the Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah for his esteemed presence.

She said that France and Kuwait shared a similar vision of the future of the region, pointing out that Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah



Al-Sabah's recent visit to Paris to meet French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna was an endorsement of that view.

She noted that the two ministers also welcomed the restoration of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, hoping that this would have a positive effect on the situation in Lebanon and Yemen, and they also encouraged the spirit of cooperation in the upcoming



Baghdad 3 conference, which aims to promote regional communication and development.

She said France and Kuwait have a lot in common in their quest for regional stability, and we both are sincerely engaged in promoting peace in the Middle East, and notably for a viable solution for the Palestinian people.

Ambassador Le Flecher said that France had become the largest European customer for the clean fuel project, and apart from trade, their long-term investment relationship with Kuwait was a testament to the trust and depth of interests that governed their relationship, and added that their historic cultural and educational cooperation was also a testament to the strong friendship.

She revealed that the issue of visas was also discussed during the ministerial meeting, noting that a positive outcome was reached by the Visa Committee from within the European Commission in Brussels in order to allow a visa mechanism with the so-called CASCADE for Kuwaiti citizens, which means that Kuwaitis will soon be able to obtain a long-term Schengen visa in their first application itself. Elaborating on the French National Day, she said it was a cherished tradition that not only occupies a special place in the hearts of all French citizens but also in the

hearts of all our francophone friends around the world.

"This celebration is a great commitment to reviving the cultural heritage of France, as our streets are filled with vibrant performances, people wear blue, white and red, and the melodies of Edith Piaf and Maurice Ravel fill the atmosphere. We celebrate the French way of life that has inspired countless poets, writers and thinkers throughout history," she added.

She said that on their National Day, they not only commemorate the 14 July, 1789 historic storming of the Bastille fortress, which marked the beginning of the French revolution, but they also commemorate Federation Day, a year later, in 1790, which brought French citizens to celebrate together. The national day commemorates both a revolution which symbolizes the quest for freedom, equality and fraternity, and a celebration, the year after, which conveys messages of unity and harmony. This double meaning of our national day tells a lot about our country, and the values it wants to convey. The love of freedom and democracy, that is vivid in Kuwait, matches this ideal.

Ambassador Le Flecher however noted that this year, like last year, "our joy is unfortunately clouded by the unprovoked war in Ukraine

launched by Russia, with its load of human rights violations which I have no doubt will be investigated by the international criminal courts. We can only hope that all this stops as early as possible, with a victory for Ukraine. And if there are negotiations, it cannot be at the expense of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a UN member. I know all Kuwaitis share this approach, because they have experienced themselves the suffering of an invasion, that is why Kuwait early on emphasized the pre-eminence of internationally agreed principles, including the intangibility of territorial integrity."

In her concluding remarks she praised her fellow French citizens in Kuwait saying that their commitment, dynamism, and spirit of solidarity contributed greatly to the quality of the relations they enjoy with their Kuwaiti friends.

She also said that she was aware of their concerns, particularly on the issues of family visas and driving licenses, and took the opportunity to assure them of the Embassy's tireless action on these subjects. "Our Minister raised these issues with the Kuwaiti Minister for Foreign Affairs during his visit to Paris, so be sure that they are taken into account at the highest level, and we have received assurances that the Kuwaiti authorities will work quickly to lift these restrictions.



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British ambassador honors Kuwaiti Youth Assembly members

Kuwaiti Youth Assembly members, who took part in a visit to London in May to participate in the Youth Assembly, were honored by being presented their certificates by the British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis, and Greg Power, the founder of Global Partners Governance Foundation (GPGF).

Members of the Youth Assembly who received

their certificates were:

Speaker of the Youth Assembly, Nawaf AlAzmi; Youth Assembly Spokesperson, Latifah AlFaraih; Head of International Relations Committee, Abdullrahman AlSaidi; Head of the Platform Committee, Jamilah AlOtaibi; Head of Entrepreneurship Committee, Altaf AlMutairi; and Youth Assembly Member, Saleh AlShammari.

The awards ceremony was also attended by the Deputy Director of the Minister's Office of Youth Affairs, Yousif Jaber AlShammari. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Lewis stated: "I was delighted to welcome members of Kuwait's Youth Assembly to the British Embassy today and hear about their visit to the UK. It was great to meet such an enthusiastic and motivated group

and get to understand more about their vision for young people in Kuwait". Notable highlights of the Youth Assembly members' visit to London included tours of Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, the latter of which was led by Lord Jeremy Purvis of Tweed, as well as sessions about the work of the UK Youth Parliament and its engagement with senior politicians.



ABCK-AmCham Kuwait celebrates US Independence Day

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosted its annual 4th of July celebration, in honor of the United States Independence Day. The first part of the celebration took place on 23 June at Hilton Kuwait Resort and offered an evening of patriotic festivities, entertainment, and networking opportunities, bringing together members of the US Military stationed in Kuwait and the local community.

Opening remarks by officials from the American Chamber and the US Embassy in Kuwait highlighted the significance and meaning of freedom and of independence. The service members were welcomed and thanked for their sacrifice and valor, as AmCham Kuwait hosts this event annually to honor those who serve in the US Military.

The event featured an array of activities and attractions designed to celebrate the spirit of the 4th of July celebrations, and it was commemorated with a cake-cutting ceremony by Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy James Holtsnider, and Defense Attaché of the US Embassy and the Overseas Military Cooperation in Kuwait.

Col. Rolandis J. Crawl, along with Chairman of AmCham Kuwait, Pete Swift,

Attendees also enjoyed live music, and various traditional American food and beverages, and took part in different games such as mini golf, beach volleyball, soccer, and other team-building activities throughout the day.

Chairman, Pete Swift, and Executive Director Paola de la Roche then acknowledged and appreciated the event's sponsors, the Platinum Sponsor and Champions, KGL and The Bridge Company; Gold Sponsors: American International University and Lockheed Martin (Champion), and the Silver Sponsor: Mike Da Jeweler.

A raffle draw at the end of the evening's entertainment saw participants winning a wide range of prizes presented by Metro Medical Group, Safety & Fire Experts, Be Organic Kuwait, The Sultan Center, Habchi & Chalhoub Group, and Hilton Kuwait Resort. The special occasion aimed to express deep gratitude for the sacrifices made by the service members to protect and defend the values and freedoms cherished by all Americans.

Argentine Ambassador stresses firm relations with Kuwait

Ambassador of Argentina H.E. Claudia Alexandra Zampieri, said the 50 years of diplomatic relations between her country and Kuwait are based on firm grounds and built on their shared values that include respect for human rights, humanitarian work that help the needy and those affected by disasters around the world.

Speaking on the sidelines of celebrations held by the embassy to mark Argentina's Independence Day, and graced by the presence of the Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Zampieri explained that despite the geographical distance between the two countries there are similarities in cultures and values, and close political and social cooperation between the two nations.

Turning to tourism from Kuwait to Argentina and revealing that the embassy's consular section issues around 10 visas per month, the ambassador pointed out that the procedures to obtain a visa for citizens and residents are very easy and convenient. He added that Kuwaitis, who are known for their adventurous spirit, should pay a visit to Argentina, as they can fulfill all their desire for adventure in one country.

Ambassador Zampieri further indicated that there are 20 agreements and memorandums of understanding that guide bilateral relations between the two countries, and represent their legal framework, including an agreement on cooperation between diplomatic institutes of the two nations for the training of diplomats, which



is awaiting renewal by relevant authorities in the two countries.

The Argentine envoy also referred to the ongoing cooperation between Argentina and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which granted several loans worth a total of KD105 million for the development of infrastructure projects in Argentina. She further noted that Argentina and Kuwait have a common vision when it came to solving challenges and tackling issues in the regional and international arena, besides exchanging support for each other in international forums.

Filipinos apprehended for falsifying documents

General Directorate of Criminal Investigation is set to summon dozens of Filipino expatriates for forging academic certificates and marriage contracts, Al-Anbaa reported. The CID's Department of Combating Counterfeiting and Forgery suspects that the expats used the fake documents to obtain driving licenses and forged marriage contracts to change their residency status from Article 20 to Article 22. Forging academic certificates and marriage contracts are both criminal offenses in Kuwait, and violators can face up to three years in prison and deportation.

The Ministry of Interior announced that the

CID department has arrested 33 Filipinos for falsifying official documents. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of the Philippines in Kuwait, the department has seized the fake documents, which were being used to complete transactions by circumventing the law. The defendants are being transferred to the competent authorities to face the necessary legal measures.

The ministry stated that the forgers of marriage contracts intended to transfer their residency from household work to company work permit by means of marriage, which could provide them higher



salary opportunities and better work conditions. Those who forged their academic certificates intended to meet the requirements for obtaining a visa to enter European countries, as some of these countries require applicants to have an academic certificate in order to be granted a visa.

On the other hand, the aim of those who forged their driving licenses is for them to provide proof of licenses issued by their home country in order to obtain a Kuwaiti license. This process requires submitting a driving license certificate from the applicant's country of origin for the transaction.

Kuwait inflation up in May

Latest consumer price figures from the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) show that the inflation rate rose 0.15 percent in May, on a monthly basis, due to the increase of prices of all main groups that influence the movement of key indices particularly food, education and clothing.

Record increase in price of the food and beverage group by 6.85 percent in May, from the same period a year ago, underpinned the rising Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for the month of May. The CSB statement indicated that the inflation of CPI in May,

excluding food and beverages, increased by 2.92 percent on an annual basis.

Other groups that also witnessed a hike in May relative to the same month a year earlier, included the clothing group that went up by 6.8 percent, housing services rose by 2.55 percent, and furnishings increased by 2.37 percent. The cigarettes and tobacco group also rose slightly by 0.30 percent.

In addition, the CSB reported that the health index rose 2.45 percent, rates of transport moved up by 2.99 percent, communication went up by 1.33 percent,



culture and entertainment went up by 2.84 percent while education rose by 0.48 percent. Meanwhile, restaurants and hotels climbed by 3.49 percent, and services and miscellaneous goods by 4.01 percent.

Consumer Price Index is a measurement that examines prices on a monthly or annual basis. Generally, it constitutes a basic index for growth or economic recession in the country, and is of significance to policy planners and decision makers at the economic level so as to work out financial and monetary policies.

Change of command at US Corps of Engineers Expeditionary District



The US Army Corps of Engineers Expeditionary District, the only forward-deployed district, welcomed its newest commander on 6 July. The reigns to the 'Caravan', as the district is known colloquially, were passed to Col. Mohammed Rahman by outgoing district commander, Lt. Col. Richard Childers during a ceremony officiated by Transatlantic Division Commander Col. William Hannan and attended by local leadership, the district workforce and Kuwait Ministry of Defense partners.

Childers, who has led the Expeditionary District for the past year, emphasized the need for strong partnerships and said the US Army Corps of Engineers does not do anything alone. "We rely heavily on our partners and the relationships that we've built at every level to accomplish our mission," he said.

Childers, praised the support from the Transatlantic Division Commander Hannan, and thanked the Middle East District leadership, corporate board, program managers, branch chiefs, area engineers, deputy commanders and senior enlisted advisors for their collective role in providing engineering solutions and expertise in a challenging region where nothing is ever easy.

Childers called his tenure as the Expeditionary District commander an amazing ride and said that the team has more accomplishments that can be mentioned. "You rose to the occasion," he said to the workforce. "It has been my honor to work alongside you. Together, we made this organization better than when we found it."



While the district has provided design, contracting, construction and quality assurance support to multiple projects across the CENTCOM region, Childers said he would be remiss to not mention the support provided to Kuwait. In 2022, the Expeditionary District executed ten independent, vital contracts at over \$12 million, he said. From constructing unit headquarters, air traffic control renovations and equipment storage warehouses for vital stocks of equipment, Childers said that, "these characterize the enduring, effective and expanding US-Kuwaiti military partnership... and I am glad to have been a part of it."

For the new commander, the opportunity to lead a dedicated, professional organization like the Expeditionary District is a humbling experience and a chance to continue to build partnerships, capacity and standing as the executor of engineering excellence in the region.

"We are the definition of engineering excellence, not just in the US, but all over the world," said Rahman. "Our civilian workforce is the bedrock of this organization. You work very hard and provide 110 percent of your skills to make a difference in this world. I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Kuwaiti photographer wins prestigious Italian award

Kuwaiti photographer Muhammad Murad made Kuwait proud by winning two awards, in the international 'Oasis' competition for nature photography, at the exhibition held in the Ruero region, northern Italy.

The Italian Society for Natural Tourism, which originated the award, stated that the international jury chose the 100 most beautiful photos for 2022 from among 25,000 shots, by photographers from 69 countries competing for the awards, now in its 15th year.

The society explained Murad won the 'Referees' Choice' award in the 'Birds' section competition for his picture 'The Dominator', and he also won the 'Honorable Mention' award in the 'Other Animals' section competition, for his photo titled 'Escape'.

In a statement to the media following the award ceremony, Murad said he is proud to be a Kuwaiti artist and to raise Kuwait's position in the field of nature photography. He added that the award enriches his creative experience, and adds yet another medal to his busy career.





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Turkish embassy marks Democracy and Unity Day



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Turkish Embassy held an event on 13 July at its premises to mark the seventh anniversary of the 15 July Democracy and National Unity Day.

Speaking on the occasion Ambassador of Turkey H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez said that a clandestine coup attempt by FETO (Fetullahist Terrorist Organisation) was ultimately thwarted by loyal security forces and millions of citizens and the President himself, who hit the streets with firm resistance to the military infiltrators.

She said that the infiltrators tried to assassinate the President of Türkiye, attacked the Prime Minister's vehicle, air-bombarded the Parliament, and massacred protesting citizens on streets. They did these heinous actions to the nation while wearing the sacred uniforms of Turkish Army, using military vehicles, aircraft, helicopters and all other lethal equipment, which belonged to the nation herself.

Ambassador Tuba said the traitors attempted to usurp the country's rule and law, but they could not estimate people's strong perseverance and heroism. People

from different political opinions came together, put aside their differences, and protected their democratic republic, of which they are proud citizens.

She said the July 15 coup attempt was the edge of the cliff for the future of our country. As the saying goes, every dark night has a bright dawn. With our epic resistance against the putschists, we have shown to all friends and enemies that Türkiye can never be captured or brought to its knees. Thanks to the measures taken in the wake of the coup attempt, Türkiye could consolidate its political stability, minimize its dependency

in terms of foreign policy, and strengthen its regional standing. The thwarting of the coup attempt marked a turning point in the history of democracy. It will be a source of hope and inspiration for the peoples of the world, all the nations, to stick tight to the will of nations against such enemies of democracy. For this reason, July 15 is commemorated as the 'Day of Democracy and National Unity', a day to keep collective memory alive.

With these feelings, we remember with gratitude our martyrs and veterans, who defended democracy with their lives. They are the heroes of the 'Century of Türkiye'.

Job skills empower youth, enhance productivity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The intertwined relationship that exists between the two components — increased productivity creating resources to support innovation, which then drives further productivity gains — develops a virtuous cycle that fuels economic growth and competitiveness, as well as serves as a major contributor to higher living standards in an economy.

Positive relationship between labor productivity, innovation, and the economic well-being of citizens emphasizes the need for governments to design policies and processes that enhance output and encourage innovation in the labor force. This is especially pertinent in countries such as Kuwait with its relatively small national cadre and overwhelming reliance in the labor market on an expatriate workforce.

However, in the 2022 edition of the annual Global Innovation Index published by the United Nations specialized agency, World Intellectual Property Organization, Kuwait ranked 62nd out of 132 nations in terms of the capacity of the workforce for creating and implementing innovation. Additionally, an analysis of a recent data survey conducted with over 250 business leaders of small, medium and large firms in Kuwait, revealed the weak productivity in the economy.

Poor ranking on the global innovation index along with findings from the productivity study should be a serious cause of concern for the authorities. An innovative and productive labor force is pivotal to Kuwait's plans to chart a new course towards a more sustainable model of development. The policy-oriented study on productivity, funded by the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS) and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), also revealed several other structural and economic anomalies that need urgent addressing.

The survey, which was designed by the Techno-Economics Division at KISR and conducted in 2020, was critically analyzed by a team of researchers at KISR. A significant incongruity revealed by the study was that while wages have been growing at an annual average rate of 4.1 percent, the corresponding growth rate of labor productivity has been only around half, at 2.1 percent. Economic theory underlines that productivity needs to grow at rates equivalent to those of wage growth, or higher, to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The study findings that this is not happening

in Kuwait points to major structural weaknesses in the labor market, including the high wages paid to nationals in the public sector. In addition, annual wage increments, that are far higher than yearly inflation rates, exacerbate wage disparities in the market. If wages are not linked to labor productivity, then less resources are available to reinvest in promoting dynamic growth, which then negatively impacts future employment growth.

Pointing out that productivity is critical to the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the economy and the welfare of its citizens, the study calls for implementing well designed and pertinent policy programs that enhance productivity, foster research and development (R&D), leverage innovative technologies, and encourage the adoption and diffusion of innovation throughout the economy, to ensure the country's sustainable development and prosperity.

The new policy actions should also entail major revamping of existing labor market skills through carefully designed upskilling programs that promote productivity, and are adaptable for a future workplace of interconnected and smart automation. Concomitantly, there is a need to scrap the current seniority-based pay system with a more dynamic model that is based on productivity and creativity merits.

Labor productivity, as defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO), is the total volume of output — measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) produced, per unit of labor — measured by the number of employed persons or hours worked, during a given time reference period. The productivity indicator provides a broad picture about the efficiency and quality of human capital in the production process of an economy.

According to the ILO index on global productivity in 2021, Kuwait with a GDP per hour worked of \$37, had a lower productivity than neighboring Gulf Cooperation Council states, with the exception of Oman which had a productivity measure of \$31. The GCC topper in productivity was found to be Qatar with \$53 per hour, followed by Saudi Arabia at \$48, the UAE at \$43, and Bahrain with \$40 in productivity.

Productivity measurements are often criticized for failing to adequately capture changes in technical advances, and tend to be skewed, as in the case of GCC states where the dominance of hydrocarbon revenues in GDP, and their relatively small populations distort productivity figures. Nevertheless, the index is a

reference guide that highlights the productivity gains that can be achieved, especially in comparison to top scoring countries such as Luxembourg, which topped the 2021 index with a productivity of \$137 per hour.

Ratios and comparisons aside, the need for job training and upskilling youth is increasingly evident in Kuwait, especially now, as the world of work rapidly adopts new technologies and smart automation that transform jobs and industries. The dearth of job-oriented skill sets in the national cadre have long been a festering cause of concern to employers, as well as to policymakers in Kuwait.

Among the causes for the deficiency in relevant job capabilities is an education system that largely delivers theoretical knowledge, while failing to equip graduates with practical skills needed for current and future needs of a changing labor market. The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has been making valiant efforts since the 1980s to provide post-school technology and vocational training through generic and specialized skills development programs.

Despite these efforts, the capabilities that youth acquire are often not in tandem with the requirements of a rapidly evolving world of work. It is imperative for youth to be prepared with the skills that employers are looking for today, as well as be adaptive to acquiring skill sets for potential new jobs in a future labor market. Another option would be for public sector employers to provide in-house or external job training programs that allow new young recruits to acquire the specific skills they need to succeed in their line of work.

However, the low priority accorded to productivity in the public sector by concerned officials, and insufficient funds to invest in appropriate job training and upskilling programs, as well as indifference among many employed nationals to gain new skills, have all contributed to a public sector that is known for its low productivity and high inefficiency.

Attempts at enticing the private sector to hire more nationals have met with the lukewarm response from businesses. Employers in the private sector are reluctant to hire young citizens, let alone train and upskill them, as many of them lack the skills required for the jobs assigned to them. Moreover, young nationals often have no interest in acquiring new capabilities through on-site training programs. Businesses also complain that many nationals tend to quit jobs at the slightest pretext without any regard for time

and expenses incurred to train them.

These systemic shortcomings have a negative impact on the country and its economic development, including a relatively high-level of unemployment among young nationals, even as there is a shortage of skilled workers in key sectors, such as in healthcare, engineering, science, information, communication and technological fields. In addition, the lack of a skilled national workforce also leads to a decline in the country's competitiveness in attracting foreign investments.

The government can help address these deficiencies, starting with reforming the education system and realigning its focus on providing more practical knowledge, as well as invest in job training and upskilling programs through TVET institutions and centers that empower youngsters who are currently not in school, employed or in training, to gain requisite skill sets.

The authorities can also engage more proactively with the private sector by offering firms that hire, train and retain nationals, financial incentives and preferential treatment in public tenders, as well as tax breaks, subsidies or other forms of assistance. Promoting entrepreneurship among young capable Kuwaitis by providing financial support, resources and training, will also help stem rising unemployment.

Additionally, the government can initiate a national skills development strategy that identifies the skills that are currently in-demand, as well as potential jobs in the future labor market, and develop plans to ensure youth gain the required skills. The strategy should also provide for measuring labor market productivity on a regular basis so that it can track and tweak progress, and identify areas where further improvements are needed in future, as well as reward individuals based on their merits in productivity and innovation.

Moreover, the new skills strategy should also provide provisions to train and support businesses by offering incentives to adopt new technologies, systems and practices that enhance the firm's overall productivity and innovation capabilities. This could include coordinating with local and international specialized agencies that provide knowledge, resources, tools and training in best practices and processes to develop productivity.

As Nobel Laureate economist Paul Krugman once noted, "Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run it is almost everything".

Border customs handicapped by lack of equipment

Amid the challenges of safeguarding the country against the infiltration of illegal goods, the General Administration of Customs border outposts are now handicapped by the absence of inspection equipment.

The lack of critical examination equipment follows the expiry of the contract given to the vendor to supply equipment to the Abdali border post, and the decision by the Ministry of Interior not to renew the contract. At the end of their contract in May, the previous contractor decided to remove the inspection devices used for checking luggage, vehicles, and trucks.

In addition, there was a withdrawal of all

handling workers, resulting in an increased workload for the port inspectors, as now they have to manually inspect each piece of luggage and private vehicles entering the country. Meanwhile, the trucks have been authorized by the Ministry of Interior to be sent directly to the Sulaihiya customs, where they are thoroughly inspected to ensure that no contraband is being transported.

The Abdali port serves as Kuwait's entrance to Europe, facilitating the continuous flow of trucks and vehicles as they enter and exit the country daily. Customs sources have emphasized the indispensability of modern inspection devices, specifically the truck

inspection device, due to its crucial role in supporting inspectors, particularly in dealing with professional smugglers operating in smuggling routes. According to them, the absence of these devices not only disrupts the customs system but also creates a security vacuum that can be exploited by smugglers.

Moreover, the number of private vehicles entering Kuwait two months ago was reported to be 10,944, while the departures amounted to 11,658, resulting in a total of over 22,000 private vehicles. Furthermore, the customs authorities also inspect a significant number of trucks before they are sent to the Sulaihiya port. Reports indicate



that despite repeated requests from the General Administration of Customs, no new tender has been issued so far.

MoSA conducts workshop on AML for charitable societies

Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) is committed to ensuring that all charitable institutions in the country are protected from money laundering activities. This commitment was reiterated last week during a workshop organized by the ministry under the title of 'Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Terrorist Financing, and its application in Charitable Institutions'.

Speaking at the workshop, the Director of the Department of Charities and Foundations at the Ministry of Affairs, Abdulaziz Al-Ajmi, said that the ministry intended to develop and tighten control over charitable organizations in the country. He added that the workshop, which was being held in partnership with the International Islamic Charitable Organization, aimed to raise AML awareness among workers in charitable and social work institutions, as well as among financiers and financial controllers of charity institutions and foundations affiliated to the MoSA.

Al-Ajmi added the ministry is keen to develop charity organizations and their work to

better distribute money donations to those who deserve, indicating that the lecturers during the workshop looked into 40 recommendations submitted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). For his part, Nassar Al-Shariaan, Head of the Governance and Combating Financial Crimes Department at the Insurance Regulatory Unit, said that "The sector of non-profit organizations (charities and foundations) is a humanitarian sector in which others are helped through donations, alms, zakat and other charitable matters. This work often necessitates the transfer of large amounts of money

overseas to implement charitable projects. However, these funds could be misappropriated by weak-minded officials in charge of those projects and diverted to finance terrorist or other illegal operations.

Deputy Director of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Department at the Ministry of Interior, Fahd Al-Dakhil, affirmed that the ministry is keen to raise community awareness and preserve the country's reputation at local and international levels.



MOI renews warning of fake messages imposing traffic fines

The Ministry of Interior has renewed its warning against fake messages and websites that are falsely claiming to impose financial fines for unpaid traffic violations.

The ministry's Security Media Department has urged the public to be wary of these fraudulent operations and to avoid clicking on any links or providing



any personal information.

The department emphasized that the ministry sends alerts on the unified government application for electronic services, "Sahel," in the event of traffic violations on individuals. The ministry has also taken the necessary measures to ensure that these alerts are accurate and that the public is aware of them.



MEW aims to purchase power from GIA

Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW) is planning to purchase power from the Gulf Interconnection Authority (GIA), the pan-Gulf electricity network set up by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to overcome any temporary power shortfall in any of the member states.

Reports indicate that it may be necessary to first enact legislation to allow discussion on purchasing energy from GIA to proceed. This is because the purchase process here is considered 'external', even if Kuwait is a member of the same body. The issue is expected to be discussed during the crucial meeting between MEW officials and the Fatwa and Legislation Department next week.

The ministry is said to have been working for months to speed up the procedures for allowing it to purchase 600 megawatts from the GIA, a step for which nearly KD30 million has been allocated. However, the Central Agency for Public Tenders had previously informed the ministry that it is not competent to give its decision on this matter, while the discussion with the fatwa is still ongoing.

Accordingly it was decided to resort to enacting a law that allows the purchase of energy from the authority, similar to the amendment that took place regarding the decree establishing the ministry, which introduced amendments allowing it to purchase energy from others inside the country. Since it is only after legislation that any further action can be taken in this matter, it is quite likely that the purchase from GIA will take place only after August, by when the current peak summer season will have subsided.

On a related note on 8 July the MEW reported that the electrical load index touched the yellow line, reaching 15,999 megawatts, which is the highest since the beginning of this summer, with the temperatures in the country reaching 48 degrees Celsius. The rise in temperatures in the coming days, as summer heat increases, is expected to strain the power network with demand for electricity rising significantly. The ministry cautioned that the best option to ensure safe and stable operation of the electricity network is to rationalize consumption.

The ministry called on consumers to control the air-conditioning devices in their homes, which consume about 70 percent of the electricity of private housing during the summer months, as well as use energy efficient devices at home, as this will make an appreciable difference in consumption.

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KIA lags regional rivals in investments in 2022

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the oldest and one of the largest sovereign wealth funds (SWF) in the world has in recent years taken a more docile approach to investments, even as some of the other SWFs in the region have been implementing an aggressive and more ambitious investment strategy.

According to Bloomberg news agency sovereign wealth funds in the Middle East are emerging as major investors in some of the largest investment deals around the world. Meanwhile, Kuwait, which at one time was a leader has slacked its pace of investment.

Bloomberg noted that KIA, which manages the approximately US\$700 billion sovereign wealth fund of Kuwait, invested only \$2.8 billion last year, compared to \$25.9 billion by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and \$20.7 billion by the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA). Together, SWFs in the region are believed to control assets worth over \$3 trillion.

The Future Generations Fund managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority reported returns of 33 percent for the year ending in March 2021, the latest data available to the public. This included a return of 38 percent from the KIA arm in London, the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO).

The dearth of high-profile deals represents



a sea turn for the Kuwaiti fund, which was once among the most active in the region. Until recently, KIA was a leading global investor, with holdings in companies such as BlackRock Inc and Mercedes-Benz Group AG.

During the 2008 crisis, it brought into banks, including Citigroup Inc, and achieved notable successes in the past, as it sold its stake in Citigroup Banking Group in 2009 for \$4.1 billion,

with profits exceeding \$1 billion. The KIO was also a prolific investor, participating in the US listing of the private equity firm TPG Inc.

Bloomberg noted that KIA does not officially

disclose the value of its assets or the details of its investment strategy, and the data and interviews show that the fund's activity has witnessed ups and downs in recent years and remains weak in terms of investment compared to its regional competitors.

To provide a historical perspective, it should be noted that the Kuwait Investment Council was established in London in 1953, a little over 8 years before the country's independence in 1961. The Council was tasked with investing surplus oil revenues to help diversify the economy and to provide a financial cushion to future generations through its Future Generations Fund. The KIA also controls the General Reserve Fund, which serves as Kuwait's treasury.

The news agency added that since the beginning of the epidemic, most of the KIA investments have been made by its subsidiaries in the sectors of infrastructure, small investments, in IPOs or listed companies and as commitments to fund managers such as Invesco Ltd, BlackRock and Northern Trust Corp.

PAM launches awareness campaign in multiple languages

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) has launched an awareness campaign in multiple languages on social media platforms to inform and urge business owners and workers to adhere to the decision banning work from 11am to 4pm each day. The work ban during peak heat time in summer, which came into effect from the start of June and is slated

to run until the end of August. The awareness campaign is being held this year under the slogan, 'Their Safety is More Important', in a reference to workers who have to endure the peak summer heat outdoors, often at risk to their health and even their lives, so that employers earn more profit for completing projects on time.

PAM urged the public to call the inspection team at phone number 24936192 and report the employment of workers during the specified curfew hours. The authority added that its inspection teams will continue to conduct field tours until the end of August to monitor violations of the work ban.

KIA in top five global sovereign wealth funds

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the state's sovereign wealth fund, maintained its fifth position globally in terms of assets, with an asset value estimated at US\$803 billion. Kuwait also retained its position of second in the Arab world, after the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, which stood fourth in the world with an asset value of \$853 billion.

In the latest update to its sovereign wealth fund listing, the global Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI) noted that Norwegian

Sovereign Fund maintained its global leadership with assets exceeding \$1.371 trillion, followed by the China Investment Authority with assets of more than \$1.350 trillion, while the Chinese SAFE Fund came in third place with assets of more than \$1 trillion.

The latest SWFI listing also indicates that Saudi Public Investment Fund came in sixth spot with an asset base of \$700 billion, followed by the GIC Private Limited of Singapore in seventh place with \$690 billion; the Hong Kong Monetary Authority with assets of more than \$514 billion in eighth position; the Temasek Holding of Singapore in ninth spot with an asset base of \$492 billion; and in tenth position, the Qatar Investment Authority with assets of \$475 billion. The SWFI stated that the assets of the one hundred top sovereign funds indexed by it has remained stable since last April at over \$11.5 trillion.

MNSSS and Toyota launch all-new Innova

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons (MNSSS) and Toyota announced the launch of the all-new Innova that caters to the needs of Toyota's most discerning customers.

The all-new Toyota Innova has a high-lifted and powerful stance combined with a dynamic side silhouette, coupled with uncompromised attention to on-road comfort. This, along with the introduction of a 5th generation hybrid electric system with EV mode, has seen the Toyota Innova reemerge as a highly ecological choice for today's discerning consumers.

Chief Engineer in charge of development of the new vehicle, Hideki Mizuma, said: "We are delighted to introduce the all-new Toyota Innova, a vehicle that offers unparalleled spaciousness, luggage space and peace of mind to all. The new monocoque structure allows us to adopt a combination of a TNGA platform, a 5th-generation hybrid powertrain, and an e-CVT that offers more interior room and develops a high-performing hybrid electric variant."

Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, Kei Fujita, stated, "We are proud to



announce the launch of the all-new Toyota Innova in the Middle East. Renowned as a family-friendly vehicle, the Toyota Innova will deliver a smooth, comfortable, and engaging driving experience."

The all-new vehicle also highlights Toyota's long-standing dedication to providing environmentally friendly vehicles and working towards achieving a carbon-neutral society."

To provide customers with a more enjoyable driving style, the all-new Toyota Innova is available

with a choice of two powertrain options. The first is an electric hybrid system that combines electric and petrol engines to offer an impressive 184 hp. The second is a petrol engine that comes with a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine that produces 172 hp. Both variants are paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) that combines powerful acceleration with exceptional overall performance.

The all-new Toyota Innova's wide, aerodynamic exterior design is complemented by a refined and

ergonomic interior designed to offer optimum comfort and convenience to all on-board. The Toyota Innova also comes with a high-floored platform, which not only enhances the comfort of rear occupants, but also contributes to a more pleasant drive, particularly over longer distances.

As with any Toyota vehicle, the all-new Toyota Innova comes complete with a comprehensive array of safety features, including six SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Traction Control (TRC), Rear Clearance Sonars (RCS), and Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS), among others. In addition, parents can enjoy peace of mind thanks to the inclusion of the ISOFIX safety system, which securely attaches baby seats for enhanced safety and security.

A selection of eight captivating exterior hues enhances the striking appearance of the all-new Toyota Innova. Complementing these exterior hues is the vehicle's sizable cabin, furnished with either a Black or Dark Chestnut color scheme. The Toyota Innova also comes equipped with either 16-inch or 17-inch aluminum wheels that further emphasize its overall glamor and upscale SUV-like aesthetic.



Early intervention crucial to limit obesity

Alarmingly increasing obesity rate in Kuwait, especially among youth between the age of 18 to 29, calls for early intervention and mitigation strategies. to fight obesity.

Highlighting this need, the head of Health Enhancement Administration at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abeer Al-Bahouh noted that statistics show a significant rise in obesity in the country, with 77 percent of the total population being overweight, and around 40 percent of these cases being obese. These figures give Kuwait the dubious distinction of being the most obese

“

Obesity has many negative impact on children's health as well, such as trouble breathing, fatigue, sweating, snoring, joint pain and late puberty for girls and boys.

”

country in the Arab world, and to rank among the top in obesity worldwide.

In a media interview last week, Dr. Al-Bahouh pointed out that being overweight is a global problem, with expectations that four



billion people will suffer from the issue by 2035, compared with 2.6 billion people in 2020. She added that worldwide the obesity rate is expected to be the highest among children and teenagers, rising from 10 percent to 20 percent among boys from 2020 to 2035, while the percentage among girls will go from 8 percent to 18 percent.

Dr. Al-Bahouh warned against the risks obesity poses for people's health, including heart and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and high pressure. She added that obesity is the fifth main cause of death. Obesity also has many negative impacts on children's health, such as trouble breathing, fatigue, sweating, snoring, joint pain and late puberty for girls and boys.

According to local statistics and data from the World Health Organization (WHO), one out of five adults suffer from extreme obesity in the Gulf. In Kuwait, the obesity rate among adults is expected to reach 52 percent by 2035.

Children's obesity is caused by bad eating

habits, sedentary lifestyle, genetic factors, intestinal biota and Cushing's syndrome. Treating obese children begins with teaching them healthy eating habits, encouraging them to engage in physical activity, therapy sessions with

a psychiatrist and treating patients with health issues leading to obesity, the doctor noted.

Dr. Al-Bahouh also affirmed that surgery targeting the stomach and intestines for weight loss is a suitable step for teenagers but not children. She stressed that these surgeries do not replace a proper diet and exercise, but they are an initial step to help people to start their weight loss journey.

Pointing out that it is the responsibility of parents to watch what their children eat and teach them to replace fast foods and soft drinks with fruits, vegetables, wholewheat products, water, natural juices and low fat milk, she added. Dr. Al-Bahouh also underlined the importance of physical exercise, having a steady sleeping time, spending time with family doing fun activities and avoiding spending too much time playing video games or watching TV.

She also emphasized the need for the Ministry of Health to launch programs and strategies to fight obesity, and to make physical education a compulsory subject in schools. She noted that the Health Enhancement Administration is continuously launching awareness campaigns in cooperation with other entities outside the ministry, aiming to limit obesity in the coming five years.

CSC declares holidays on July 19 and 20

The Civil Service Commission announced Wednesday, July 19, is a public holiday and that work will be suspended in all ministries, government agencies, public bodies and institutions on the occasion of the Hijri New Year, and Thursday will be considered a day of rest.

The CSC stated today, that work will resume on Sunday, July 23.



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Exploring Ethiopia

A Journey through Ancient Wonders and Cultural Riches



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

Nestled in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is a land-locked country of enchantment and awe-inspiring beauty. With a history that spans thousands of years and a vibrant culture that celebrates its diverse heritage, this captivating country offers an unforgettable travel experience for adventurous souls and cultural enthusiasts alike. From ancient rock-hewn buildings and breathtaking landscapes to vibrant festivals and warm hospitality, Ethiopia has something to captivate every traveler.

"The best time to visit Ethiopia is between October and March as it is not as hot... there are also plenty of fantastic experiences for tourists from June to September as well. Ethiopia has taken major steps to protect and conserve several ancient heritage sites to make them more accessible and appealing to tourists," shares Ethiopian national and local business owner, Mercy Woldie.

Often referred to as the 'cradle of humanity' due to its rich paleontological evidence of early hominids in this area, the best place to start your journey in Ethiopia, is in the capital city of Addis Ababa. Here you can visit the National Museum to see the awe-inspiring fossilized remains of 'Lucy,' which scientists claim could be one of humanity's earliest ancestors. The city also boasts the impressive Holy Trinity Cathedral, with its stunning architecture and beautiful stained glass windows.



No visit to Ethiopia would be complete without exploring Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its rock-hewn churches. Carved out of solid rock in the 12th century, these monolithic churches, including the iconic Church of St. George, are a testament to human creativity and devotion.

Beyond its historical treasures, Ethiopia boasts breathtaking natural landscapes that will leave you in awe. The Simien Mountains National Park, another UNESCO World Heritage site, offers dramatic mountain scenery, deep valleys, and rare wildlife. Trekking through this majestic landscape, you may encounter several indigenous species only found in the country.

"Ethiopia has fantastic wildlife including



the legendary Ethiopian wolf and the bleeding-heart monkey as well as around 30 indigenous birds only found in certain areas of the country," adds Woldie.

Another unique place to visit is the Danakil Depression, one of the hottest places on Earth. This surreal destination is known for its colorful sulphur springs, salt flats, and volcanic landscapes.

Ethiopia is also renowned for its warm and welcoming people. Experience the genuine hospitality of the locals as you indulge in traditional Ethiopian cuisine. Do not miss the chance to savor injera, a spongy sourdough

culture, where the traditional coffee ceremony is a symbol of hospitality and friendship.

"As Ethiopia was never colonized, visitors can experience an undiluted culture including our unique coffee ceremony. Many tourists are surprised to know that Ethiopia also has its own calendar and alphabet with 13 calendar months per year," shares Woldie.

When planning your trip to Ethiopia, remember that it is a country of diverse landscapes and varying climates. Pack accordingly and be prepared for both hot and cold weather, depending on your destination and the time of year. It is advisable to consult with local guides or tour operators to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience. When planning your visit to Ethiopia, you will find a range of accommodation options that cater to different preferences and budgets. Whether you're looking for luxury hotels, charming guesthouses, or unique cultural experiences, here are some of the best places to stay in Ethiopia:

Addis Ababa: As the capital city, Addis Ababa offers a wide selection of accommodation options. If you seek luxury, consider staying at the Sheraton Addis, a renowned five-star hotel known for its excellent service and elegant amenities. For a more boutique experience, try the Jupiter International Hotel or the Radisson Blu Hotel.

Lalibela: In the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lalibela, where the famous rock-hewn churches are located, you will find several charming guest-houses that provide an immersive experience in the local culture. Consider staying at the Maribela Hotel, Tukul Village, or Seven Olives Hotel, all of which offer comfortable accommodations and are within walking distance of the churches.

Bahir Dar: Situated on the shores of Lake Tana, Bahir Dar is known for its scenic beauty and proximity to the Blue Nile Falls. Here, you can stay at the Kuriftu Resort and Spa, which offers luxurious lakeside villas, a relaxing spa, and stunning views of the lake. Another option is the Jacaranda Hotel, a cozy and well-appointed hotel with beautiful gardens.

Gondar: Famous for its medieval castles and rich history, Gondar offers stays at the Goha

Hotel, which is located on a hill overlooking the city, and provides comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and panoramic views. For a more intimate experience, consider the Lodge Du Chateau, a boutique hotel located in a renovated colonial-style building.

Axum: This city is steeped in ancient history and is home to impressive archaeological sites. The Sabeen International Hotel offers modern amenities, spacious rooms, and a convenient location near the famous stelae. Alternatively, the Yared Zema International Hotel provides comfortable accommodations and warm hospitality.

Simien Mountains: If you plan to explore the breathtaking landscapes of the Simien Mountains National Park, consider staying at the Simien Lodge. This eco-lodge offers comfortable rooms, stunning views, and access to trekking routes within the park.

Harar: Known for its ancient walled city and unique cultural traditions, Harar offers a range of guest-houses and traditional Ethiopian homes for visitors to stay in. The Heritage Plaza Hotel and the Tewodros Hotel are popular choices, both providing a comfortable base for exploring the city's narrow alleyways and vibrant markets.

Dilla: Saron lodge is the place to stay if you choose to visit this city in the southern part of Ethiopia, near Hawassa. The lodge is surrounded by beautiful greenery and an organic coffee forest. The lodge is built in a contemporary style and offers delicious food, for both leisure and business travelers. Expect to meet the local baboons during your stay.



Ethiopia will ignite your imagination, stir your soul, and leave an indelible mark on your travel memories. With its ancient wonders, natural splendor, and vibrant culture, this captivating destination is waiting for you. "As the second biggest country in Africa, Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest civilizations and currently has one of the fastest growing economies in the world," concludes Woldie.

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





Qatar continues to shine post World Cup



By Nourah Khan
Exclusive to
The Times Kuwait



When the FIFA World Cup 2022 was held in Qatar it not only showcased the country's prowess in hosting international sporting events but also marked a turning point for its tourism industry. The country leveraged the momentum created during the month-long football festival, when the world's eyes were trained on the nation, to bolster its image and its tourism sector, as well as position itself as a sought-after global tourism destination.

I did not get the chance to visit Qatar during the World Cup, and my last visit to Doha was about five years ago, so when I visited the place last month, I was astonished by the huge transformation and development that had taken place in the short space of five years between my visits.



The World Cup served as a catalyst for extensive infrastructure development across Qatar. The nation's transportation network has been significantly enhanced, with a modernized airport, expanded roads, and an efficient metro system, making it easier for tourists to explore the country's treasures. The legacy of these infrastructure projects ensures a seamless experience for visitors, even after the tournament.

During the four nights that I spent in Qatar, I discovered that Doha is a wonderful and enjoyable family tourist destination that features several beautiful indoor and outdoor spaces to visit and explore, including outdoor places and venues created to defy the sizzling heat of summer, such as the air-conditioned streets at the Katara Cultural Village.

Qatar, a captivating destination with its rich cultural heritage and modern attractions, offers an array of experiences for tourists during the summer season. While the weather may be hot, Qatar's tourism scene thrives with numerous activities and sights that cater to visitors seeking adventure, cultural exploration, and relaxation.

Qatar boasts a treasure trove of cultural landmarks and attractions. One must-visit site is the renowned Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, which showcases a stunning collection of art and artifacts from the Islamic world. Delve into the vibrant Arab culture, witness the intricate craftsmanship, and gain insights into the region's artistic heritage.



I had the opportunity to have lunch in one of the famous restaurants in Qatar, inside the Islamic museum which must be on the list if you are lucky enough to get a reservation. The restaurant is run by the world-class chef Alain Ducasse, who has three Michelin stars. You can enjoy your lunch with a stunning view of the Doha Corniche, also the interior decoration was amazing, it was designed by international interior designer Philippe Starck



The capital city, Doha, stands as a testament to Qatar's rapid development and modernization. Explore its bustling souqs (traditional markets) like Souq Waqif, where aromatic spices, vibrant textiles, and traditional handicrafts await. The city also offers a range of dining options, from fine international cuisine to local delicacies, ensuring a gastronomic adventure for every palate.

One of the must have experiences in Doha is the Safari trip. Embark on an unforgettable desert safari experience, where the mesmerizing beauty of Qatar's sand dunes unfolds before

your eyes. Enjoy exhilarating activities like dune bashing, camel riding, and sandboarding, immersing yourself in the tranquility of the desert landscape as the sun sets, casting a magical glow over the surroundings.

Shopping in Doha has become one of the enjoyable experiences, especially after the opening of the Printemps Doha store in Doha Oasis last year, and for those who do not know this store, it is a very ancient French store,



and this is the first time the store has opened a branch in the Middle East. The store offers a luxurious shopping experience as it collects all the world-famous brands under one roof.

In addition, Printemps offers a unique entertainment experience, as it contains the largest indoor theme-park in Doha, named Quest. It also contains a cinema and a large number of international restaurants.

You should also visit Place Vendome Mall, one of the most luxurious malls in Qatar. Place Vendome is located in Lusail City, and will soon become the fashion capital of Qatar. The mall, with its mesmerizing beauty and impressive architecture, has astounded visitors from world over.

Place Vendome is the most prominent destination for luxury shopping and modern life, as it contains more than 580 international brand stores. With a design inspired by classic French architecture, the building includes an open courtyard containing dancing fountains, surrounded by restaurants and cafes. The mall contains entertainment facilities and the Le Royal Meridien Hotel

One of the wonderful places I visited in Doha is The Pearl-Qatar, an artificial island located near the West Bay area.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Coming Disruption of Animal Production



Peter Singer

Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, is Founder of the charity The Life You Can Save and the author, most recently, of Animal Liberation Now. In June, he received the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award for the Humanities.

One day, we may look back on 2023 as the year when it became apparent that the gigantic industry of raising animals for food was heading the same way as the industry that for most of the twentieth century dominated how we record and store images. Is this year the equivalent, for animal production, of 1989, when the first digital camera aimed at the general public was launched?

There are signs that it might be, starting with the Israeli Ministry of Health's approval, in April, of a dairy product that does not come from cows or other lactating animals. Remilk, the manufacturer, is a company on an ambitious mission: 'creating dairy that is a far superior version of itself'.

Forty years ago, Genentech used then-novel recombinant DNA techniques to create genetically modified bacteria that would produce human insulin for diabetics that was better, and less expensive, than insulin obtained from the pancreases of pigs. In a similar manner, Remilk copies DNA from cows into yeasts so that they create a product that is, Remilk says, identical to cow's milk, minus the lactose that makes milk hard to digest for some people, and also free of cholesterol, antibiotics, and growth hormones.

Remilk claims that its dairy products are identical in taste, texture, and cost to traditional dairy products, while using only 1 percent of the land and 5 percent of the water, and emitting just 4 percent of the pollutants. (Cows are major emitters of methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas.) If that is not enough reason to try the product, consider that making dairy products without cows also eliminates the standard practice of impregnating cows every year and taking their calves away soon after birth so that the milk is available for humans.

Another momentous development came in June, when the United States Department

of Agriculture approved two separate applications, one from Good Meat, a division of Eat Just, and the other from UPSIDE Foods, to sell chicken grown from chicken cells. Again, no living organism is involved, and the original cell sample can be taken without adding even one more death to the more than 70 billion chickens killed each year for their meat.

“ If the dramatic changes heralded by recent developments in meat and dairy production occur, most of the Earth's land surface will benefit, and cellular seafood could save the oceans from the depletion of many fish stocks. **”**

The US was not the first to approve cellular meat, also known as cultured or cultivated meat. Cultured chicken has been on sale in Singapore since 2020, but so far it has been unable to compete on price with chicken produced by the conventional method of crowding tens of

thousands of birds into a shed, raising them for 6-7 weeks, and then slaughtering them. But with the much larger US market now beckoning, the hope is that economies of scale will drive down the price and drive up production.

Research and development in cultured meat is now a global phenomenon. The Dutch company Mosa Meat was the pioneer, demonstrating a cultured hamburger in 2013, but predicting that it would take a decade to bring the product to market. That prediction looks accurate, with Mosa opening an expanded production facility in May and expecting to begin sales in Singapore soon,

and in other markets as it gains approval.

In May, the China Meat Food Comprehensive Research Center demonstrated its interest in cellular meat at a major forum for technological innovation in Beijing. The Beijing Daily reported that the Center's technology grows animal muscle cells in vitro and uses 3D printing to form them into steaks or chicken breast, with a nutritional content identical to that of meat from animals.

If even part of this R&D achieves its aims, the consequences will be far more significant than the displacement of the film industry. After all, raising animals takes up most of the

world's agricultural land, including as grazing land and the land used to grow feed crops, and it is also a major contributor to climate change. If the dramatic changes heralded by recent developments in meat and dairy production occur, most of the Earth's land surface will benefit, and cellular seafood could save the oceans from the depletion of many fish stocks.

Given that meat consumption continues to rise as countries become more affluent — with China the textbook example — a more efficient form of producing meat and other animal products is desperately needed. Vaclav Smil, a world authority on food, energy, and the environment, has listed five categories of 'undeniable burdens' implied by reliance on growing crops to feed animals. They include monocultures for growing feed crops, with increased soil erosion; inefficient conversion of plants to animal products, especially in cattle; generation of huge volumes of concentrated animal waste that preclude adequate recycling to crops; greenhouse-gas emissions from feed crops and animal metabolism; and animal-welfare concerns related to the treatment of a vast number of confined animals.

Of course, if everyone just switched to a plant-based diet, we could eliminate all these burdens, and, as a recently released report shows, reduce the risk of new pandemics. Despite the encouraging rise in plant-based eating, however, a complete switchover does not seem likely to happen anytime soon. It will be easier to persuade people to avoid meat from animals if they can still eat meat and other animal products that taste like the products they know, but do not require raising, feeding, and killing a live animal. And that nourishes the hope that we will soon see the end of a cruel, inefficient, destructive, and dangerous industry.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Financing Childhood Growth



Joel E. Cohen and John E. Rogers

Joel E. Cohen, Professor of Populations at The Rockefeller University and Columbia University, is the author of *How Many People Can the Earth Support?*

John E. Rogers is Senior Counsel at Clark Hill PLC, specializing in international transactions.

In 2020, chronic undernutrition stunted the growth of nearly a quarter of the world's children under five years old. Being too short for one's age, as a result of chronic undernutrition, can cause irreversible physical and cognitive damage and increases the risk of dying from common infections.

Improving the lives of these children is not a question of food supply. Current cereal grain production, about 2.8 billion tons, provides enough calories to feed 11-14 billion people — more than meeting humanity's current needs. But less than half of the world's grain is eaten by humans, with the remainder fed to animals or burned as fuel. Almost every gallon of gasoline in the United States, for example, contains 10 percent corn ethanol.

Too poor to affect grain prices in global markets, the chronically hungry are economically invisible. To avert the devastating and long-lasting effects of poor nutrition and health, we propose an innovative financing mechanism that will attract impact investors and ensure adequate food for these malnourished children.

In 2019, two World Bank economists, Emanuela Galasso and the late Adam Wagstaff, found that childhood stunting reduces adult economic productivity, estimating a per capita income loss of between 5-7 percent in developing countries. And that figure does not account for the millions of stunted children who die young.

Galasso and Wagstaff also conducted a cost-benefit analysis of applying ten tested nutrition interventions over ten years in 34 countries that together account for 90 percent of the world's stunted children. According to their estimates, the benefits would outweigh the costs by a ratio of at least five to one, and the annual rate of return would be 12 percent.



Such high payoffs could induce investors to buy development impact bonds focused on ending childhood stunting in low-income countries. The idea behind this type of financial instrument, in which investors provide financing for development programs and receive returns only if agreed-upon outcomes are achieved, is to generate a positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.

strict and too slow in payouts to governments. Nevertheless, an independent assessment from the London School of Economics concluded that a 'properly reformed' PEF has 'great potential' to contain pandemics with early and effective responses.

While the large benefit-cost ratio of tested nutrition interventions provides a compelling rationale for development impact bonds, a model of private financing or a public-private

governments could contract with bond issuers to establish and operate anti-stunting programs and then gradually increase payments to these issuers for their nutrition interventions as the expected economic benefits materialize.

Of the many possible models for 'childhood growth' bonds, the majority of these bonds would be jointly issued by a parent entity in the developed world and its subsidiary in the local country. Together, they would design the program in consultation with the participating government and recognized experts in child nutrition, field interventions, and data evaluation. After receiving the invested funds, the parent entity would channel them tax-free to the subsidiary to implement the nutrition interventions alongside the government. That could mean buying food from local producers or markets and delivering it to poor pregnant women and undernourished children. Supplying food, at least in part, through monitored childcare programs outside the home could reduce misappropriation.

Under the contract with the parent and the subsidiary (whose terms would be public), government payments would be in hard currency. A 'sinking fund' would cover interest payments until the government begins to see results. The government would also have the right to assume control of the program at any time in exchange for prepaying the bonds.

The simplest model would offer fixed principal and interest payments, backed by fixed contractual payments. But investors with a greater appetite for risk may prefer governments to reward better-than-expected improvements in child nutrition and related tax revenues with larger contractual payments, triggering larger payments to the bondholders. Of course, poorer-than-expected improvements would result in smaller payments.

It will be important to design payment rights early and well. Given that emerging markets have a long history of debt crises, and that governments tend to repay development-finance institutions (DFIs) first, investors will want these bonds to rank equally in payment rights with the government's debts to DFIs. They may also insist on the contract being tied to a governmental obligation to a DFI, a DFI guarantee of the bonds, or an agreement by a DFI to purchase the bonds from the bondholders upon any payment default.

Nutrition-intervention bonds are an innovative financing vehicle that promises to put food on the table, prevent childhood stunting, and yield high returns for investors. If well-structured, they can be powerful catalysts for economic growth and improving the welfare of the world's most vulnerable people.

“A parent entity in the developed world and its subsidiary in the local country would design the program, in consultation with participating governments and recognized experts in child nutrition, field interventions, and data evaluation.”

The World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) tried a similar mechanism, albeit to provide emergency funding to the poorest countries in the event of a pandemic. Investors purchased insured bonds in 2017, and the proceeds were to be paid to developing countries to contain infectious-disease outbreaks. The Bank closed the PEF in April 2021, amid criticism that it was too generous to investors while being too

partnership could avoid the PEF's mistakes and overcome governmental and individual corruption, cumbersome bureaucracies, and political instability.

Returns on investments in nutrition-intervention bonds would be tied to programs' projected economic benefits. After all, effective nutrition interventions should boost productivity and increase the tax base in the participating country. For example,

Qatar continues to shine post World Cup

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

It contains Mediterranean-style marinas lined with yachts, and includes residential towers, villas and hotels, and provides a luxurious shopping experience in the finest stores and high-end galleries. The island also includes modern restaurants, ranging from refreshing ice cream to five-star culinary experiences, and features walkable squares and squares, as well as a wide range of beautifully landscaped gardens. The Pearl is a popular attraction thanks to its elegance and attractive designs like the "Arabian Riviera".

Katara is the cultural neighborhood in Doha, and it is one of the interesting places that have been developed to suit the general atmosphere in Qatar. At Katara, you can visit the Katara Mosque and the Golden Mosque, and wander around the High Street, which offers a wonderful shopping experience with Galeries Lafayette store. The street also has a strong external cooling

system, so you can enjoy eating in the outdoor seating of restaurants. A new tourist destination has joined the destinations in Doha, which is the



old port of Doha, which was developed as a huge tourism project, with its distinctive view of the waters of the Arabian Gulf. You will feel that you are walking around the Greek island of Santorini as you wander among the colorful houses. The place contains various shops, restaurants and cafes. And contains also a fish market

You must also put a visit to the Musheireb neighborhood within your itinerary. The developing 'Msheireb Downtown Doha' area is characterized by its contemporary architecture, and includes bright white mosques and a group of history museums in elegant palaces designed in the Arab style.

The Radwani House reviews Qatari family life, while the Bin Jelmood House features exhibitions on the history of slavery around the world. As for dining options, they include international restaurants in high-end hotels, and popular souvenir stalls and the 'Souq Waqif' arcades are also located within walking distance.

Qatar's summer tourism scene offers a captivating blend of cultural heritage, recreational activities, and modern attractions. Despite the high temperatures, the country continues to charm visitors with its rich history, warm hospitality, and diverse experiences. So, whether you're seeking adventure, relaxation, or cultural exploration, Qatar welcomes you to create unforgettable memories in the Arabian Peninsula's hidden gem.

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.

Thought “ for the week

Happiness is not being
pained in body
or troubled in mind.

- Thomas Jefferson



Chef Binu's

Herbed Roast Beef Tenderloin

Rich in protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals such as iron and zinc, this tender, juicy, and very flavorful beef loin roast is not only of high nutritional value but also easy to prepare. The ingredients used in this dish are readily available in the local market.

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

Serving: Three portions

Ingredients:

- Beef 525g
- Olive oil 10ml
- Rosemary 5g
- Salt 5g
- Pepper 5g
- Garlic 10g
- Carrot 50g
- Cauliflower 50g
- Broccoli 50g
- Cherry tomato 50g
- Zucchini 50g
- Potato 80g
- Cream 10ml
- Salt 5g
- Pepper 5g
- Chopped parsley 5g
- Beef stock 100ml
- Mushroom 40g

Instruction:

For beef tenderloin:

- Cut the beef into portions of approximately 175g
- Marinate the beef with olive oil, salt, pepper and chopped rosemary, set aside for a while to absorb the marinade
- Heat a pan, add olive oil and sear the tenderloin pieces until golden brown on both sides. Set aside for resting the beef
- Preheat a oven, place your beef in a pan and roast for 14 minutes at a temperature of 180 degree centigrade for a beef tenderloin that is well done as well as juicy and tender
- Remove beef from oven and set aside to cool

For buttered veggies:

- Wash, cut and boil all the veggies; remove from heat and rinse in chilled water] Heat a roasting pan, add butter and coat the pan evenly with melted butter
- Place cooked vegetables in the pan and add salt, pepper, and chopped parsley
- Cook on high heat while tossing the vegetables
- Remove from flame and set aside
- For mashed potato:
- Boil the potato and mash it with whisk or a grater
- Heat a pan, add the mashed potato, cream and butter and mix well. Add salt and pepper and garnish with chopped parsley
- For mushroom sauce:
- Chop and saute the mushrooms and set aside
- Place beef stock along with onion, celery, leeks and carrot in a pot and cook over low flame to reduce water content, add the sauteed mushroom
- To serve:
- Pipe the mashed potato in line in the center of a plate, place the buttered vegetables on top and then place the tenderloin. Drizzle mushroom sauce on top of the beef, garnish with chopped rosemary, and wow your guests.



Creative, enthusiastic and with a passion for food, Chef Binu Joseph is currently Chef at The Regency Hotel Kuwait. With over 17 years of experience serving in luxury five-star properties in the region, Chef Joseph has an in-depth knowledge in preparing multiple cuisines, including Arabic, Asian, American, Continental and Indian dishes. In addition, his culinary skills in putting his own

stamp on traditional dishes to create new combinations of flavors, textures and tastes allows him to prepare dishes that meet the tastes of the most discerning patrons. Chef Joseph now brings his versatility and 5-star culinary creativity to the pages of The Times Kuwait, with simple recipes that anyone can prepare using ingredients that are readily available in Kuwait.

IYM 2023

As the promotion of millets during the International Year of Millets (IYM) gathers pace, millet-based dishes are increasing in popularity. Here is a new take on traditional sushi, using proso millets infused with fruits to deliver a unique taste.

Multi Millet Marble Cookies



This is an eggless cookie recipe that is healthy and requires readily available ingredients and tastes fabulous; what more could you ask for from a cookie that also deliciously melts in your mouth.

Traditional cookies are usually prepared using all-purpose flour, but this recipe uses totally gluten-free flour made from multiple millets, including pearl-millet, finger-millet and sorghum.

Pearl millets are nutritionally rich and have a high fiber content that aids in controlling blood sugar levels, reduces cholesterol, and also has cancer-preventing properties. Similarly, finger-millets are known for being a good source of protein, calcium, iron, and fiber. Like oats, this is one of the most nutritious foods, low in fat, and easy to digest. Sorghum is another gluten-free cereal grain with strong antioxidative properties besides being high in protein, fiber and minerals such as phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and iron. Products made from millet flour are decidedly a healthier option than most forms of wheat flour

Total Time 1 hour

Yield: Around 35 pieces

Ingredients:

- For pearl-millet dough:
- 1 cup pearl-millet flour
- ¼ cup clarified butter (ghee)
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp. baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 tsp vanilla essence
- For finger-millet dough:
- 1 cup finger-millet flour
- 1/4 cup clarified butter (ghee)
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 tsp. Vanilla essence
- For sorghum dough:
- 1 cup sorghum flour
- 1/4 cup clarified butter (ghee)
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 tsp vanilla essence
- For garnishing chopped nuts (optional)

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 180°C

For millet dough:

- In a bowl, combine the ghee, powdered sugar and vanilla essence and whisk until light and fluffy
- Gradually add in the pearl millet flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and mix together well to form a soft dough.
- Prepare the other two doughs in a similar manner
- Wrap the three doughs in separate plastic wraps and refrigerate for 10 minutes;
- Take the dough out of refrigerator, pinch small pieces from the dough and shape into round balls
- Take a ball from each of the millets and combine them together so that they form a marbled ball.
- Lightly flatten the marbled flour balls and arrange on a baking tray lined with greased paper
- Garnish each ball on top with nuts; Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, remove from oven, and set aside to cool completely
- Store in an air-tight container and serve with a cup of tea, coffee or milk.

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



Fasting, calorie counting, equally effective in weight loss

New studies show that fasting for eight hours is as good as, or no better than, counting calories for weight loss. The way you phrase this choice depends on where you stand when it comes to the two diet plans — whether you are a proponent of intermittent fasting, or of calorie counting when deciding what food to eat.

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is a catch-all term for eating patterns that could include several full days of fasting per week, or time-restricted eating daily. In IF the eating pattern, cycles daily between periods of fasting and eating, or it could involve having one main meal only on certain days of the week.

On the other hand, calorie-counting to lose weight is based on the concept that to lose weight, you always need to burn more calories than you eat. This can occur through a combination of exercise and eating a balanced diet and food in moderation, while keeping a tab on the calories consumed and expended daily.

The new study based on clinical trials and published in mid-June in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a medical journal published by the American College of Physicians (ACP), found very little statistical difference between the two groups. The intermittent fasting helped people with obesity drop around 4kg on average, over one year. This was right on par with a second



study group who went the traditional route of calorie counting and portion control.

However, the main selling point of time-restricted eating is perhaps its simplicity: Instead of laboriously counting calories, people only have to watch the clock. And small studies have shown that limited eating windows — 6 hours being a popular one — can help people eat less and shed some kilos.

For their study, researchers recruited 90 adults with obesity who were looking to lose weight. Most of the people in the study were female and weighed around 100kg at the start of the trial. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of three groups: One started the time-restriction

plan, a second committed to calorie-counting, and the third made no changes and served as a control group.

One group of participants in the clinical trial were allowed to eat across an 8-hour time span, from noon to 8pm, and then to abstain from food until noon the next day, without cutting out any particular food or measuring strict portion sizes. The calorie counters aimed to trim their daily calories by 25 percent and met with a dietitian to come up with healthy food choices. They were also told to fill half of every plate with fruits or vegetables, and consume about half their calories as carbohydrates, 30 percent as fat, and 20 percent as protein.

For the first six months, the time-restriction group, limited their eating window to noon to 8pm, and for the next six months, they were allowed to expand it from 10am to 8pm. Both diet groups also had periodic phone or video

calls with a dietitian to talk about generally healthy eating. The statistical analysis found no significant difference between the two groups' weight loss, with obese people losing on average 4.5kg through intermittent fasting, compared to 5.4kg through calorie restriction over a one-year time period. Experts point out that while there is evidence to suggest Intermittent fasting does help people lose some weight, it may be no better than old-fashioned calorie counting.

The effect of having less time to eat is thought to lead to eating fewer calories, and therefore losing weight. This trial found the intermittent fasting group ate 425 fewer calories per day and 20 calories less than the calorie-restricted group. Time-restricted eating is undoubtedly an attractive approach to weight loss in that it does not require the purchase of expensive food products, allows persons to continue consuming familiar foods, and omits complicated calorie tracking.

One concern with time restriction is that it focuses on limiting food intake, and not on making healthier food choices. Although healthier eating should be the goal, people's food preferences are so ingrained, and factors like income and access to healthy food come into play. That it becomes difficult to change easily.

Health experts also suggest that people looking to lose weight start with some kind of support, like talking to their doctor or a dietitian. While people can certainly do time restriction on their own, they might meet with more success if they have support from nutritionists, dietitians, or from friends and family members.



Protecting kids from summer heat

Climate studies irrefutably show that global temperature is rising, and that in many parts of the world the number of days of scorching summer heat in a year is increasing. The rise in daily temperatures along with extended periods of heat in summer are taking a heavy toll on human and animal lives everywhere, and is a cause for concern to the authorities and healthcare providers alike.

Climatologists are warning that hotter days and longer periods of hot summer are likely to increase in the years ahead, and more people are probably going to be impacted by the sizzling heat as they go about their lives. Children in particular are more vulnerable to increasing temperatures, largely because they breathe faster and take in more air compared to their body weight than adults. They also breathe lower to the ground, where some pollution settles.

In Kuwait, many of us have come to regard blistering high temperatures as the norm during summer months, but while days of extreme heat were previously rare, record-breaking high temperatures have been registered in the last couple of years.

Experts believe that higher temperatures and longer periods of high temperature could become de rigueur in the years ahead.

Young children, especially, depend upon their

parents and caregivers to protect them from extreme heat, but many families may not have access to resources to cope with these intense summer challenges. That said, here are a few safety tips provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to keep in mind when venturing out in the summer heat, for kids, which is equally applicable to adults.

Consider the air quality and pollution. Sun and heat can worsen local air pollution. Check your local Air Quality Index, before stepping out as this will help you know when air pollution caused by dust from sandstorms or smoke from wildfires raise the risk of asthma and other health issues. Keep babies below the age of six months out of direct sunlight. Instead, they should be shaded by a tree, umbrella or stroller canopy while outside. Dress your baby in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs. Use brimmed hats to prevent a sunburn on the neck.

Older kids should also cover up, staying in the shade when possible and limiting sun exposure during the peak intensity hours of 10am to 4pm. Choose tightly woven or cotton clothing that is cool and protective. Have your child wear a wide-brimmed hat that can shade the cheeks, chin, ears and back of the neck. If your child takes specific medications, ask your pediatrician if it increases your child's risk for heat illness.

Damaging UV (ultraviolet) rays can bounce back from sand, water, or concrete, so be especially careful when out on the beach or in desert areas. Sunglasses with UV protection can protect your child's and your eyes.

Any skin not covered by clothing should be covered with a sunscreen that is at least SPF 15 and labeled as 'broad-spectrum' to guard against both ultraviolet B (UVB) and ultraviolet A (UVA) rays. Apply sunscreen about 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply every two hours after swimming, sweating or toweling off.

If possible, avoid the ingredient oxybenzone, which is a sunscreen chemical that may have hormonal properties, and look for products that contain zinc oxide or titanium oxide. While it is fine to use sunscreen on young babies on small parts of their skin not protected by clothing or hat, they touch their mouths a lot and it is best to prevent them from ingesting sunscreen.

Advocate in your community for access to green space for all children. Plant trees or participate in tree-planting service events to reduce urban heat effect and clean the air.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

After Affirmative Action



Daron Acemoglu

Professor of Economics at MIT, is a co-author (with Simon Johnson) of *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity*.

The US Supreme Court's decision disallowing explicitly race-conscious affirmative action in college admissions has intensified debates about privilege and social mobility in the United States. Elite colleges are central to these issues, and the disappointment felt among advocates of greater inclusivity and openness in higher education is understandable. But so, too, is the elation among Asian-Americans, who were discriminated against in the admissions process at institutions such as Harvard University.

In any case, we now have an opportunity to think about more radical solutions to what is clearly a broken admissions system at top US universities. The problems with the current approach are legion. For starters, the children of wealthy donors and alumni fill many coveted slots, and nobody bothers to deny that the motivation for such legacy admissions is to raise more money and add to top schools' endowments.

Moreover, despite their need-based scholarships and stated commitments to inclusivity, elite colleges make only a limited contribution to social mobility when compared to less selective public universities and colleges. It is these institutions that provide the main pathway for upward mobility among whites and underrepresented minorities alike, owing to the simple fact that they admit far more Americans from less-advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, who are unlikely to get into the most elite institutions.

The current system also allows admissions officers to make highly consequential decisions without transparency or accountability, and it gives far too much weight to extracurricular activities, even though this clearly privileges children from upper-middle-class backgrounds.

What would meaningful reforms look like? One worthy idea is admissions lotteries, which were originally suggested by the psychologist Barry Schwartz in the early 2000s and endorsed more recently by the Harvard philosopher Michael J. Sandel in *The Tyranny of Merit*.

Sandel's book, together with Yale law professor Daniel Markovits's recent book on the same topic, offers a broader criticism of 'meritocracy' for its role in creating a sense of entitlement among those who succeed and a sense of failure among those who do not. Both books warn of 'faux meritocracy', whereby merit provides cover for the social networks, connections, and wealth that truly enable success.

But it would be a mistake to base all admissions at elite colleges on lotteries. After all, these are top-notch research universities, and there is social value in connecting the best-performing students with the best researchers, as well as in preserving the ethos of academic excellence.

Still, a hybrid lottery system could work, with applications being classified into three groups on the basis of a metric like the SAT/ACT (the two standardized college-level aptitude tests used in the US). In addition to the rejection pile, the second group could comprise the top 10 percent of scores that the college in question currently admits, and the third could include all those in the bottom 90 percent of the acceptable range. This latter group — which may be five to ten times larger than the size of the class that is currently admitted — would then be narrowed down by lottery. There is nothing inherently unfair about a lottery. Because the differences in academic



preparedness among members of this third group are generally quite small, selection often depends on other factors, such as whether an applicant is an athlete or has excelled in other extracurricular activities. But these criteria are just as arbitrary as a lottery.

Lotteries can also transparently give a boost to applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as by weighting for low parental income, or who hail from low-income zip codes or rural areas. Residential segregation is a growing, and increasingly well-documented, social problem in America. But if students from low-income zip codes got a significant boost to their chances of admission to elite colleges, many middle-class parents might think twice before moving to high-income suburbs.

However, since even weighting the lottery probabilities would not balance the scales, we also should consider an additional measure: automatic applications for top students from low-income schools. This way, high-potential candidates from underprivileged areas will not miss out on opportunities simply because they were

discouraged from applying, as so often happens with the current system.

Lotteries would also create a more diverse student body at top universities, because the lottery group would have more heterogeneous economic and ethnic backgrounds, as one already finds at mid-level colleges. A lottery-based system therefore would invite a broader reassessment of meritocracy, by undermining the conceit that children from already rich areas and parents are naturally and deservedly succeeding. Some of these students would get in, but many others would not — and this benefit would be even further amplified if admitted students are not told whether they were in group two or three.

Finally, a hybrid lottery system would eliminate the non-transparent, arbitrary power of admission committees, and it could make it easier to evaluate the most elite (and expensive) institutions' value-added. Do universities such as Stanford and Princeton really 'earn' the fees they charge? We could now find out.

Naturally, such a radical change would meet with fierce opposition, not least from the families that currently gain access through their social networks, investments in extracurriculars and extra instruction, and by relocating to higher-income areas with better-resourced schools. Some elite colleges may also fight such reforms, for fear of losing out on alumni donations. But do they really need bigger endowments?

In any case, breaking with the status quo might require only one or two colleges moving first, perhaps with some inducement from the government. For example, federal grants and other transfers could be made conditional on an institution achieving sufficient representation of children from low-income households or zip codes. This is time for new thinking and bold action in US higher education.

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