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THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

United Nations Day, celebrated each year on 24 October, commemorates the founding of the United Nations (UN) on this day in 1945. Against the somber backdrop of unprecedented death and destruction witnessed during World War II, the United Nations was established with the fervent hope that it would help prevent another devastating war like the one the world had just lived through.

In April 1945, at a time when nations were in ruins and the world yearned for peace, representatives from 50 nations gathered at San Francisco in the United States to attend the United Nations Conference on International Organization. Over the next two

months, they discussed, drafted and then signed a seminal document, the UN Charter. Four months after the San Francisco Conference, and following ratification of the Charter by majority of signatory governments, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations came into being on 24 October 1945.

Today, no other global organization wields the same legitimacy, convening power, and normative impact as the United Nations. The UN is the only global entity capable of providing relief and care, and extending hope to millions of people engulfed in crises and conflicts around the world. As the sole international organization with the means and the reach to provide support to people everywhere, the UN helps realize the aspirations of



impoverished and discriminated people even in the furthest corners of the world.

Kuwait has actively promoted

the principles and values enshrined by the UN Charter. It was only two years later, on 7 May 1963, that the United Nations Security Council

unanimously decided to recommend to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that Kuwait be admitted to the UN membership. Accordingly, a week later on 14 May, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 1872 admitting Kuwait as the 111th member state of the United Nations.

In his first address to the UNGA in 1963, the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, back then the country's foreign minister, said: "Kuwait's participation in international activities clearly indicates that the independence of Kuwait and its membership in the UN are not an end in themselves, rather they are a means by which Kuwait would shoulder its responsibility of improving the lives of people in our country and around the world."

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Opportunities for young Kuwaitis

As the young generation tries to find its place in Kuwait's job market, more young professionals are gravitating toward IT-related businesses.

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Kuwait sounds like an excellent place to be born and grow up, and indeed it is. A high-income country with reasonably good standards of living, Kuwait is in a position to think about more important issues, such as the future of its young generation. The country's Public Authority for Youth is one of the organizations in charge of this. The authority has an inclusive definition of 'youth', considering anyone between 14 and 34 are young enough to benefit from its initiatives. The Youth Public Authority (YPA) is particularly keen to make a difference in three areas: the psychological health of young individuals, their physical well-being, and the improvement of their skills.

Good employment opportunities can contribute to the betterment of all the aforementioned factors. Psychological well-being, in particular, has been linked to work. A 2020 scholarly paper by Drake and Wallach published in the journal *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* noted that "unemployment worsens mental health and gaining employment can improve mental health." It is estimated that while unemployment is generally low in Kuwait, it is higher among young individuals, at 12-25 percent according to various sources.

YPA is aware of the challenges faced by the younger generation in the job market. And, therefore, it is lobbying with various sectors across the economy to persuade them to set aside employment opportunities for the youth. Former YPA director general Mishaal Alrubaie



had a meeting with the Kuwaiti Union of Banks to discuss "mechanisms of joint cooperation to support the banking sector with trained nationals and enhance its contribution to raising the degree of youth employment in the private sector," according to Arab Times. The Union of Banks has announced 100 special job opportunities for the country's youth following the negotiations.

At the same time, various businesses are being encouraged to admit young talents to their midst, and entrepreneurship is encouraged among the youth, so that the youth will learn to be in charge and proactively create job opportunities for themselves. Kuwait's business ecosystem is famously conducive to SMEs and start-ups, especially thanks to the country's wide-ranging tax exemptions. "Young entrepreneurs do not pay taxes, barely pay any utilities, and

almost all services are provided for free," Alrubaie told TBY. There are also easy-access loans for the country's youth with entrepreneurial ambitions. Such loans often come with a grace period of five years, which is more than enough for an SME to take off. The loans are up to KWD400,000 (USD1 million), which are sufficient to implement start-up ideas in many sectors, if not all.

The only problem, however, is that Kuwait's prosperous economy is already dominated by long-established corporations. Competing in saturated markets is not easy, especially for young SMEs. The youth are, therefore, encouraged to focus on emerging sectors, where there are no traditional market players. YPA is guiding young entrepreneurs to try their luck in a business with a high chance of success. "We found based on research that the least volatile sector in Kuwait is the IT and technology

sphere," Alrubaie told TBY. There is no wonder that most Kuwaiti start-ups launched after 2020 are IT related.

The IT sector has been changing enormously recently. While new developments such as remote work and AI have changed the skill set required for success in the sector, in many cases traditional university courses have failed to catch up with the new realities. It seems, therefore, essential for the youth of Kuwait to be equipped with the right skill set to succeed. "We have a job creation program where we are focusing on skills and career paths instead of a university degree. Having a degree is not enough to land a job. You need a certain skill set with it," noted Alrubaie in his interview with TBY.

This brings us to the importance of skill development in youth, and IT literacy in particular. YPA is currently running a 're-education' program, helping young people to adjust their skills and education to the real needs of the job market. Courses in cloud computing, coding, and web development are currently in vogue. Other government departments are running similar programs. The country's Public Authority for Manpower recently launched an initiative called 'My Trail to Professionalism'. In-depth career advice has been given to young graduates, while 'offering an entire rationalization of the non-public sector and its advantages,' according to Kuwait News.

There are talks that the country may start a career-orientation program targeting students at an earlier age, so as to enlighten the Kuwaiti youth about the realities of the job market while they are still at university or even high-school. This will hopefully prepare the future workforce of the country for more ambitious careers in the private sector, where the young generation can show off its entrepreneurial skills and business acumen to build Kuwait's future economy.

Finance entities reject proposal to lend to state enterprises

A proposed law that seeks loans for state-owned, or affiliated, enterprises from Kuwait Investment Authority and the Public Institution for Social Security, has faced strong opposition from the Central Bank of Kuwait, as well as from the two financing entities.



The proposal, put forward by several lawmakers, aims to secure loans for cash-strapped state-owned enterprises that have struggled to break-even despite being helped to stay afloat for years through generous state subsidies and loans.

Expressing its objection to the proposal, the

Central Bank of Kuwait voiced apprehension on the viability of these loans and noted that it would have a negative impact on the local banking sector, as well as on the state's monetary policy, and interest rates. It suggested that this could lead to the emergence of a government financing sector running in parallel with the banking industry, thereby introducing competition that might influence the banks' role in the local economy. Furthermore, these loans would not adhere to the established interest rate structure.

In its rejection of the proposal, the Kuwait Investment Authority said that the provisions of these loans fell outside its jurisdiction, and the proposal did not specify the loan sizes. The authority suggested seeking a legal opinion from the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

Meanwhile, the Public Institution for Social Security said in its disapproval of the proposal that providing loans to state enterprises is not part of its strategic plan for investing funds. The institution noted that its primary focus is achieving maximum returns with the least amount of risk to fulfill its obligations and disburse beneficiaries' rights.

The proposed law was intended to address the challenges faced by state-owned entities seeking financing for their economic development projects. These companies often need to secure loans from financial institutions, exposing them to various financial risks due to unfavorable lending terms.



ABCK-AmCham Kuwait holds diwaniya on diversity and inclusion

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait's Women in Business Focus Group hosted its final diversity and inclusion diwaniya event for the year 2023, with a primary focus on the sustainability and continuity of diversity and inclusion strategies for organizations. This event served as a vital precursor to the diwaniya summit, scheduled for 6 December. The event was attended by professionals representing various industries, as well as leaders from different government and private sector executives.

The diwaniya provided a platform for in-depth exploration of numerous topics crucial for promoting diversity and inclusion within organizations, including identifying and addressing barriers to women's career progression and advancement, exploring strategies for women's capacity building

in the workplace, delving into the role of leadership in championing diversity, and inclusion and holding them accountable, strategies for creating a safe and supportive work environment, and addressing challenges in sustaining diversity and inclusion efforts within organizations.

The event underscored the importance of creating and nurturing peer groups and providing employees with opportunities for mutual learning. Furthermore, the event addressed the availability of resources for training on conscious and unconscious bias, upskilling, and networking.

The Women in Business Focus Group extended a warm invitation to individuals, organizations, and business leaders interested in advancing diversity and inclusion to participate in the diwaniya event.



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UN Secretary-General briefs media at Rafah Crossing



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

In an unprecedented move, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has addressed media personnel at the very site where a humanitarian situation is rapidly evolving.

Speaking to media at the Rafah-crossing in Egypt on Friday, 20 October, the UN Chief drew attention of the world to the paradox of hope and despair for a besieged community being separated by a border wall, strategic interests, and bureaucratic hurdles.

Secretary-General Guterres stated: "It is impossible to be here and not to feel a broken heart. We are witnessing a paradox. Behind these walls, we have two million people who are suffering enormously — who have no water, no food, no medicine, no fuel; who are under fire, and need everything to survive.

"On this side, we have seen so many trucks loaded with water, with fuel, with medicines, with food. Exactly the same things that are needed on the other side of the wall. So these trucks are not just trucks. They are a lifeline. They are the difference between life and death for so many people in Gaza. And to see them stuck here makes me be very clear. What we need is to make them move, to make them move to the other side of this wall, to make them move as quickly as possible and as many



some conditions and some restrictions. And so we are now actively engaging with all the parties, actively engaging with Egypt, with Israel, with the US, in order to make sure that we are able to clarify those conditions, that we are able to limit those restrictions in order to have as soon as possible these trucks moving

those verifications need to be effective, and at the same time, those verifications need to be done in a way that is practical and in a way that is expedited.

"On the other hand, we are not in a no-man's land. We are in the land of a sovereign country, Egypt. And it is essential to recognize

we have enough fuel on the other side to distribute aid to the people in need.

"So, it is very clear that it is absolutely essential to solve these problems quickly and I am hopeful they will be solved quickly to make sure there is massive support, humanitarian support, to the people of Gaza.

"Unfortunately, this is not a normal humanitarian operation. It is an operation in a war zone and that is the reason why I have appealed for a humanitarian ceasefire, not that I consider that a humanitarian ceasefire is a precondition for humanitarian delivery. We don't want to punish the Gaza people twice. First because of the war and second because of the lack of humanitarian aid. But it is clear that a humanitarian ceasefire will make things much easier and much safer for everybody.

"And I want to end by expressing my deep gratitude to the people and the Government of Egypt. Egypt is today the fundamental pillar that allows hope to exist on that side of the border. Hope that these trucks will move to support them. Hope that the food, aid and the medicines I have seen in a plane that has landed will also go to the people that need it. Hope that there will be a future and hope that one day there will be peace with a two-State solution, with Palestinians and Israelis living in peace in two States, one side by the other."

“



We are not in a no-man's land. We are in the land of a sovereign country, Egypt. And it is essential to recognize the role of the Egyptian Red Crescent and the UN Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), to be able to distribute aid on that side.

”

as possible. "Now, recently it was announced by Israel and by the United States that humanitarian aid will be allowed to enter Gaza. And I know that there is also an agreement between Egypt and Israel to make it possible. "But these announcements were made with

to where they are needed."

He added, "We are looking for convoys to be authorized, with meaningful numbers of trucks to go everywhere into Gaza to provide enough support to the Gaza people. However, there are requirements of verification. But

the role of the Egyptian institutions and namely of the Egyptian Red Crescent. And finally, for the UN Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), to be able to distribute aid on that side, it is necessary that UNRWA has fuel and so we need to have the guarantee that



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Indus Group holds career counseling session with students at IEAS School

Indus Group, the pioneer and leading exhibition organizers in India, held a career counselling and guidance meet with students at Indian English Academy School (Don Bosco). The event was aimed at providing advice and guidance to students on their future education choices.

The event was attended by experienced career counselors who provided valuable insights to students on career opportunities, industry trends, and job market demands. The counselors also gave guidance on which courses and degrees would be most beneficial for students to pursue in order to achieve their career goals.

The career guidance team was warmly welcomed by Fr. Bosco Angelo D Mello, SDB - Principal - who appreciated the initiative taken to provide the students with a first hand insight on career options. The students were encouraged to ask questions and share their concerns with the counselors. The counselors provided personalized advice based on each student's interests and aspirations. They also highlighted the importance of gaining practical experience and building a strong network in the industry.

Speaking about the event, Thiagrajan from



the Indus Group said, "We are committed to providing students with the right guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future. The career counselling and interaction meet is just one of the many initiatives we take to support the Indian education system."

Indus Group has been organizing exhibitions in India since 1995 and has organized over 120 exhibitions across the country. The group has also organized over 150 exhibitions in 20 countries, including 111 India Education Exhibitions across 20 countries/cities, making it a leading player in

the exhibition organization industry. Indus Group's goals also include making India one of the top destinations for education in the world by organizing events across 50+ countries and bringing 15,000 students to India, while bridging the gap between students and top universities and institutions worldwide. Their mission is to promote education tourism, create awareness about emerging career opportunities, and empower students to make informed decisions about their future.

Overall, the career counselling and interaction meet was a great success, with students leaving

with a better understanding of the education and career opportunities available to them. Indus Group remains committed to supporting the Indian education system and helping students achieve their career goals.

Among the participating universities who were able to share valuable advice and knowledge to the children were Vellore Institute of Technology, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institute, Vishwakarma University, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, BML Munjal University, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), RV University, Acharya Institutes.

Safeguarding Your Business

The Vital Importance of Cybersecurity Solutions in the Digital Age

In today's digital landscape, businesses confront unprecedented challenges in safeguarding their valuable assets. The surge in cyber threats and malicious activities underscores the critical need for companies, irrespective of size or industry, to prioritize cybersecurity solutions. Recent statistics reveal that 83% of successful cyberattacks are targeted attacks.

As cyber threats evolve, robust cybersecurity measures become indispensable. Sophisticated techniques employed by hackers demand a comprehensive defense strategy. KEMS Zajil Telecom's Cybersecurity Solutions, encompassing next-gen firewalls, antivirus, intrusion detection systems, encryption protocols, network security, EDR, XDR, and privilege access management stand as an essential line of defense, fortifying vulnerabilities and thwarting unauthorized access.

Alarming statistics show that 43% of cyber attacks are directed at small businesses, and only 14% are adequately prepared to defend themselves.

The legal and ethical obligation to protect sensitive data is emphasized by regulations like GDPR, PDPL, and Consumer Privacy Act. Non-compliance can result in severe penalties and reputational damage. Embracing KEMS Zajil Telecom's Data Privacy and Advisory services showcases a commitment to data protection, earning trust and loyalty. Notably, 40% of organizations have experienced leaks of confidential information. The aftermath of a cyber attack extends beyond financial losses, encompassing significant downtime, disrupted operations, and the loss of intellectual property. To proactively mitigate these risks, investing in KEMS Zajil Telecom's Managed



Security Services, including incident response, and threat management services, ensures continuity of operations and safeguards brand image.

The projected global cost of cybercrime is estimated to reach \$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, highlighting the urgency for businesses to fortify their cybersecurity defenses. In an interconnected world, supply chain attacks and third-party breaches pose additional risks. KEMS Zajil Telecom solutions, such as SASE, SDWAN, and ZERO Trust Architecture, establish a secure ecosystem with stringent security measures across all touchpoints.

In conclusion, with the escalating frequency and sophistica-

tion of cyber threats, businesses cannot afford to overlook the importance of cybersecurity solutions. By investing in robust security measures, organizations can protect their sensitive data, comply with regulations, and safeguard their reputation. Prioritizing cybersecurity is not just a smart business decision; it is an essential step toward ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of any organization in the digital age.

For more information on how you can shield your business from cyber threats, check out KEMS Zajil Telecom Cybersecurity Solutions on www.kems.net and get your FREE Cybersecurity Assessment today! Kalaam provides a portfolio of cutting-edge digital solutions that are tailored to the needs of customers of all sizes in key markets and verticals across the region, including BFSI, education, government, hospitality, healthcare, retail and more.

Following the recent acquisition of Zajil, the combined entity operates a network of 53 Points of Presence (PoPs) across 25 countries.

Kalaam's fully owned terrestrial cable system, Kalaam Network Optical Transit (KNOT), which spans Kuwait, Bahrain, KSA, UAE and Qatar is now coupled with consortium ownership in undersea cable Europe-India Gateway (EIG), a 15,000 km international fiber-optic submarine cable system covering 12 countries from India and the Middle East to Europe.

Through this extensive network, Kalaam is uniquely placed to serve international and regional telecom carriers and enterprises.

To know more about Kalaam Telecom Solutions log onto www.kalaam-telecom.com

Kuwait ranks among countries ready for EV uptake

Arthur D. Little (ADL), the world's first management consulting firm, has released its latest report, 'Global Electric Mobility Readiness Index (GEMRIX) 2023', which shows Kuwait ranking 14th globally in electric vehicle (EV) readiness. This significant achievement aligns with the country's ambitious infrastructure and environmental goals, as well as its broader economic diversification strategy.

Partner and Travel and Transportation Practice Lead at ADL Middle East, Joseph Salem, emphasized Kuwait's commitment, stating, "Kuwait's strategic initiatives in the electric vehicle sector are not just ambitious but actionable. Plans for the establishment of an EV City by the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) underlines the country's resolve to be at the forefront of sustainable transportation."

Kuwait's high per capita GDP, public readiness, public and private collaboration to build a robust EV ecosystem, as well as government incentives and its focus on sustainable transportation are making the country ripe for EV adoption. These concerted efforts are setting the stage for Kuwait to make significant strides in achieving its New Kuwait 2035 vision and becoming a key player in the region's sustainable transportation landscape.

In 2021 KPA announced plans to establish



the Middle East's first city to serve electric vehicle manufacturers, called EV City. The plan serves as a concrete manifestation of the New Kuwait 2035 vision and was a clear signal that Kuwait is committed to becoming a leader in the regional EV sector.

The Contracts Committee of the KPA approved a proposal to build the EV City, which will provide all appropriate port and logistical services to major global players, including manufacturers of electric cars, according to General Manager of KPA, Sheikh Yousef Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. He also highlighted that leading EV makers sell directly to customers via online platforms, thereby relegating KPA's role to providing only certain infrastructure and

logistical services to manufacturers, which is a common service provided by other international ports.

Now in its third annual iteration, the GEMRIX 2023 expands its scope to include 35 markets across all continents, including dynamically evolving automotive markets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and South-East Asia. This makes it the most comprehensive EV market readiness indicator available in the industry today. The expansion highlights a notable surge in global EV adoption, driven by government initiatives and consumer willingness.

With EVs making up 88 percent of all new cars sold in 2022, Norway maintains its position as the global leader in EV readiness,

with China following close behind. Germany, the UK, and Singapore are in the next three positions, as they were found to be markets where EVs were on the verge of becoming mainstream.

Meanwhile, countries such as the US, Japan, United Arab Emirates, and India make up the Emerging EV Markets category. In those markets, the intent to increase EV adoption is recognizable and supported by government initiatives, but charging infrastructure or vehicle availability still needs to be improved.

The final group (Starters), which includes, for example, South Africa, Turkey, and Malaysia, are still very early in their EV journey, with adoption held back by high cost of ownership and a nascent EV ecosystem. Determining factors for EV adoption were also found to vary — consumers in higher-income markets prioritize environmental protection and vehicle performance, while those in lower-income countries focus on cost-efficiency as a driver.

GEMRIX summarizes 50 data points per market on five major categories that reflect the key drivers for EV adoption. Those include customer preparedness, public infrastructure readiness, vehicle cost comparisons, and government incentives plus regulatory support.



FAIPS-DPS commemorates 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

FAIPS-DPS wore a look of excitement as Students of classes 10 and 12 at FAIPS-DPS presented a special assembly on 2 October to commemorate 154th birth anniversary of Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, a leader in the truest sense who believed in equality, education, progress and the importance of eradicating all negativities from our thoughts and actions, as well as surroundings.

Principal Ravi Ayanoli then led invocation of the divine presence with the school's morning prayer, which was followed by the mellifluous rendition of 'Vaishnava Jana to' by the school choir. A fascinating skit on Gandhiji's Dandi March prepared and enacted by class 10 students highlighted the views of the 'Father of the Nation' on non-violence and how this inspired him to lead the mass movement that ultimately led to India's freedom.

An inspirational dance incorporating a few songs drew attention of the audience to the principles of ahimsa, as well the melodious singing of a medley of patriotic hymns brought in an air of nationalism and filled everyone with awe and admiration towards the deeds of Mahatma Gandhi.

In his speech, the principal emphasized on the teachings of Gandhiji that urged people to be brave and bold and face the challenges that come across their way without hurting others. He also highlighted the Mahatma's quality of humility and his desire for unity and encouraged all to be humble in their dealings with people and cultivate unity in their midst.

Vice Principal Vineeta Munshi then proposed the vote of thanks to all the attendees. The event gave the students an impetus to inculcate the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi in their day to day lives.



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Career counselors share valuable advice with senior students



Senior students from Indian Public School interacted with experienced career counselors from reputed Indian universities at the school auditorium last week as part of understanding their career options and their future educational choices.

The educational team was welcomed by Indian Public School Principal Lucy A. Cherian. She thanked the organizers for their timely presentation to the children who would greatly

benefit from the interaction with the career counselors.

The sessions were organized by Indus Group, the pioneer and leading exhibition organizers in India. The event was aimed at providing advice and guidance to students on their future education choices.

The event was attended by experienced career counselors who provided valuable insights to students on career opportunities,

industry trends, and job market demands. The counselors also gave guidance on which courses and degrees would be most beneficial for students to pursue in order to achieve their career goals.

During the interaction students were encouraged to ask questions and share their concerns with the counselors. The counselors provided personalized advice based on each student's interests and aspirations. They also

highlighted the importance of gaining practical experience and building a strong network in the industry.

Speaking about the event, a spokesperson for Indus Group said, "We are committed to providing students with the right guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future. The career counseling and interaction meet is just one of the many initiatives we take to support the Indian education system."

MNC's to incur taxes as Kuwait set to join OECD



The plan to levy a Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate (GMCTR) on Kuwait's multinational companies (MNCs) that operate in multiple markets has gained further traction with the likelihood that Kuwait could soon join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

More than two years ago, in October 2021, 136 countries agreed to the OECD plan to implement a 15 percent global minimum tax rate on MNCs, starting in 2023. The global agreement was necessitated following the rapid growth in digitalisation, whereby companies were able to create and grow scale without mass — the growth of firms without a physical presence in the country where it operated — through reliance on intangible assets or centrality of data.

Digitalization technology allowed companies to avoid paying tax in countries where they operated by shifting their profits to other low-tax jurisdictions. This resulted in a 'race to the bottom', as countries tried to attract foreign investment by offering special tax concessions.

A major pillar of the GMCTR is that it introduces a 15 percent minimum corporate tax on multinational groups with revenue exceeding EUR 750 million. This tax structure is expected to generate around US\$150 billion annually in additional tax revenues, and address the relationship between parent MNCs and their subsidiaries. According to current rules subsidiaries located in tax havens pay little to no taxes. This will not be possible in the future. As the potential of GMCTR looms, many Kuwaiti companies that operate in multiple jurisdictions, including banks and MNCs are engaging teams of specialized experts in global corporate taxation to assess the expected financial impact of the new tax on their budgets and their net profits. Around 20 companies, including government entities that operate in multiple markets are expected to be subject to the tax. While the implementation of this tax is not projected to affect the 2023 budget, and is more likely to begin in 2024 or 2025, Kuwait is expected to levy no more than the 15 percent tax stipulated by the GMCTR.

The 296 Challenge The New Ferrari Challenge contender



On the eve of the Finali Mondiali, which take place at the Mugello Circuit between October 24 and 30, Ferrari will present the 296 Challenge, the ninth model in the history of the Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli.

Due to debut in the Europe and North America series in the 2024 season, the 296 Challenge introduces a slew of new features with respect to the Ferrari 488 Challenge Evo and, in certain respects, is a revolutionary design.

The new 296 Challenge is the embodiment of an innovative new philosophy that has seen far-reaching work carried out on the road car to optimise its specifications for track use. Both in terms of performance and lap consistency throughout a race, the 296 Challenge rewrites the parameters of the Prancing Horse single-make series, offering solutions that closely mirror the specifications of the 296 GT3, which made its debut this season.

Derived from the 296 GTB, the 296 Challenge ushers in substantial modifications on the power unit, aero and vehicle dynamics fronts, all aimed at guaranteeing

maximum performance on the track. It is the first car in the history of the championship to be powered by a 120-degree V6: the new model sports the 2992cc twin turbo engine without the hybrid component, a choice also made for the 296 GT3. The engine unleashes 700 cv with maximum torque of 740 Nm, with the result that the 296 Challenge sets a new power record for the segment with 234 cv/l.

The 296 Challenge's aero package delivers downforce figures unprecedented in the single-make series' history, ensuring the maximum efficiency in all conditions. In fact, the 296 Challenge generates in excess of 870 kg of downforce at 250 km/h with the spoiler at its maximum angle of attack.

The car sees the debut of ABS EVO Track, a specific adaptation of the innovative system introduced for the first time on the 296 GTB. With the addition of new CCM-R PLUS brake discs, both braking performance and consistency are improved. New, specifically-developed Pirelli 19" tyres have also made a substantial contribution to the car's handling and performance.

Kazakhstan's Republic Day

Celebrating Progress and Journey to Global Prominence



H.E. Azamat Berdibay
Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Kuwait

On 25 October each year, Kazakhstan commemorates Republic Day, a day of unique significance, as it marks the pivotal moment in 1991 when Kazakhstan declared its sovereignty, and signalled the nation's commitment to carve out a destiny reflecting the people's aspiration and their cultural identity.

Today, Kazakhstan stands tall as the biggest economy in Central Asia. Since gaining sovereignty, the nation has witnessed a meteoric rise in living standards, with its citizens experiencing improved health, education, and overall quality of life.

In the realm of domestic politics, Kazakhstan swiftly adopted a constitution, delineated the roles of president and parliament, and has since conducted several rounds of competitive elections. The emphasis has always been on unity in diversity, ensuring that its myriad ethnic groups find voice and representation in the nation's political fabric.

The last few years have been especially transformative for Kazakhstan. The country has achieved substantial progress in its democratisation journey, exemplified by the implementation of wide-ranging political reforms, including constitutional amendments following last year's national referendum.

Kazakhstan's commitment to progress is also evident in the country's economic story, one that has earned international acclaim. With vast reserves of oil, gas, minerals, and metals, the nation effectively leveraged its natural wealth. Strategic infrastructural developments, enticing foreign investments, and diversification initiatives propelled Kazakhstan from an agrarian landscape to become a leading economic powerhouse.

The decision to establish Astana as the capital in 1997 symbolised this forward-looking vision, melding modern architectural wonders with the indomitable spirit of the steppes. More recently, Kazakhstan has become the top investment destination in the region and a major financial centre. This is a result of concrete reforms and initiatives over the years, including the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre. Yet the journey is far from over.

In his latest state of the nation address on 1 September, the country's President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, proposed additional economic reforms with the aim of promoting fairness, inclusiveness, and pragmatism. He outlined objectives to diversify the economy, strengthening industry, and targeting stable economic growth of 6-7 percent.

On the international stage, Kazakhstan has etched a unique identity through its astute diplomatic endeavours. By championing



nuclear disarmament — evidenced by the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the relinquishing of its nuclear arsenal after the country gained independence — the nation positioned itself as a global advocate for peace.

Additionally, Kazakhstan has fostered regional cooperation, playing significant roles in platforms such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union. By ensuring positive relations with major powers like Russia, China, the European Union, and the US, Kazakhstan manifests as a bridge between East and West, offering a harmonising narrative in an often-divided world.

Regarding the interaction of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the State of Kuwait, I would like to especially emphasise that Kazakhstan and Kuwait are bound together in historical and cultural ties and bilateral relations are very cordial. We cooperate in political, strategic, and economic affairs. Our cooperation ranges from bilateral to regional and international/multilateral fora. Top level exchanges in recent months have given a new momentum to ties. Kazakhstan attaches high significance to its relations with Kuwait.

However, both sides realise that this is a time of close economic cooperation and our ties in this arena are much below the potential the two nations have. Similarly, people to people contacts and communications linkages are minimal. These need to be enhanced and we jointly are striving for that.

During his address at the most recent UN General Assembly, President Tokayev reaffirmed that his country will continue cooperation with its major allies on all strategic issues. This approach has positioned Kazakhstan as a viable mediator in international crises, a role that it has already fulfilled successfully through the Astana Process on Syria.

The progress Kazakhstan has made since its declaration of sovereignty is not just a testament to its past, but a robust foundation for its future. This foundation is fertile ground from which new innovations, deeper diplomatic ties, and further advancements in all spheres — social, political, and economic — will undoubtedly spring. The momentum generated by these achievements is poised to propel Kazakhstan even further in the coming decades, reinforcing its position as a global beacon of growth and development.

For the people of Kazakhstan, Republic Day is not just a nostalgic nod to the past, but an embodiment of their commitment to a unified and prosperous future. This day is a celebration of their resilience and vision, a vision that elevated Kazakhstan from a former Soviet republic to a beacon of progress and diplomacy on the global stage. The promise of tomorrow, illuminated by the achievements of today, ensures that Republic Day remains a celebration of not just sovereignty, but of endless possibilities.



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Amount paid for unissued Civil ID cards to be held in credit

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced that people who submitted application along with the KD5 fee to renew or receive a new Civil ID card before May this year but were not issued the cards due to an administrative decision, will have the paid amount credited against their name with PACI, and which could be availed of when the owner submits a fresh Civil ID application.

Elaborating on the new announcement, Deputy Director General for Civil Registration Affairs at the Authority, Jaber Al-Kandari, explained that earlier this year, PACI had decided to stop the issuance of cards applied for prior to May of this year. This, he said, was done in order to expedite the backlog in issuance of cards submitted after that date.

Thousands of citizens and residents who had submitted applications for Civil IDs prior



to May of this year have still not received their civil cards. The new announcement makes clear that all those who did not receive the Civil ID card but have paid the fees of KD5

for the issuance of the civil ID card, will have a credit of KD5 remaining in their balance with PACI, in the event that the card has still not been issued. The Authority further

confirmed that dates of issuing the card have been restored to the earlier timeline of 24 to 48 hours.

Al-Kandari added that "great pressure delayed the issuance of about 200,000 cards in the previous period, most of which are for expatriates, despite the fact that their owners paid fees and met the conditions of issuance," He explained that "the current administration decided months ago to cancel all card transactions submitted before May 2023, while retaining the fees paid as a right of their owners, so that if someone submits a new application, no new fees are collected from them but rather the fees are adjusted from their credited account."

Al-Kandari also urged people whose cards are ready to collect at the automated machines to do so expeditiously, as cards accumulating within the machine was hampering issuance of new cards.

UN and Kuwait, promoting a peaceful sustainable planet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

More recently, while addressing the 77th session of the UNGA, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah called for increased global cooperation and multilateralism to tackle the challenges and crises facing the world, and bring about lasting peace. He added, "The experiences of modern history have proven to us that peace, and its related mechanism of mediation and dialogue, is and will always be the ideal resolution to conflicts, no matter how protracted they are."

Over the past 60 years, and in line with its principled and responsible stance, Kuwait has made significant contributions to the work of the United Nations, and has been an active partner in UN efforts to promote global sustainable development, support humanitarian activities, and maintain and sustain international peace and security around the world.

Shortly after its independence in 1961, Kuwait established the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to provide economic assistance to fellow developing countries. Since its establishment the Kuwait Fund has provided over 900 development assistance loans to over 100 nations totaling over US\$20 billion, making Kuwait one of the most active players in the field of development. Additionally, in 2015 Kuwait announced that over the next 15 years it would provide \$15 billion in support of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

Kuwait has also been in the forefront of supporting global humanitarian activities, and a reliable partner of the UN in providing aid and assistance to countries facing crises, including natural calamities, and man-made conflicts. More specifically, Kuwait has led and encouraged attempts by the UN to support refugees and internally displaced people fleeing the fighting in Syria that broke out in 2011, and has remained unresolved to date.

In response to the calamitous humanitarian situation arising from the Syrian conflict, and at the request of the then United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Kuwait hosted three 'International Humanitarian Pledging Conferences for Syria'. Held in Kuwait consecutively in 2013, 2014 and 2015, the three pledging conferences together raised more than US\$7 billion to alleviate suffering and provide solace to those afflicted by the Syrian crisis. In addition to pledging \$1.3 billion at these three conferences, Kuwait also pledged a further \$300 million at the 'Supporting Syria and the Region Conference' that it co-hosted in London in 2016, along with the UK, Germany and Norway.

Kuwait's leadership in global humanitarian action was recognized by the United Nations at a ceremony held at the UN Headquarters on 9 September 2014, when the late Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in recognition of His Highness' generous contributions, efforts, and continuous support as a 'Humanitarian Leader' towards the United Nations humanitarian operations.

Kuwait's generosity and magnanimity has also been acknowledged and reciprocated by the global community. Just as one unanimous UN Security Council (UNSC) decision in 1963 led to Kuwait becoming a member of the global community, it was another unanimous UNSC decision in 1990 that led to Kuwait's rebirth as a free and sovereign state following its liberation in 1991 from the invasion and occupation by Iraq.



In November 1990, the UNSC through its decision No.678 called on Iraq to unconditionally withdraw all its forces from Kuwait by mid-January 1991. Failure to comply with the decision set in motion a cascade of events that ultimately led to a 35-nation UN coalition force liberating Kuwait in February 1991. Having known the price of liberty, Kuwait has ever since its liberation been a staunch advocate of peace and freedom around the world.

In addition to supporting UN peace initiatives worldwide, Kuwait has also driven reconciliation efforts in the region and the wider Arab world. The country's reputation as a neutral and fair mediator, as well as a generous and unconditional provider of humanitarian and development assistance to people everywhere, reinforced its credentials as a trusted partner and facilitated negotiations to end conflicts and reconcile differences among Arab states.

The intrinsic and inextricable link between supporting economic and social development

on one hand, and achieving peace and stability on the other, as evidenced in Kuwait's peace efforts, has also been established by the UN and by other academic and social institutions worldwide. The coupling of peace and progress is also reflected in the progress of nations in achieving their UN development goals over the past 22 years.

In the course of achieving the global development goals — first as part of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 2000 to 2015, and since then, the 2015–2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — the global community has realized that peace and stability mutually reinforces development and human rights in a community or region. And, that it is not possible to effectively achieve one, without ensuring the other.

A review of the 15-year MDG period by UN analysts and experts revealed that while pov-

stresses were found to be among the major root causes of serious conflicts. Studies on recent civil wars and other conflict situations have identified stresses in the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social, and environmental. In addition, stresses caused by human rights violations, and injustice were also found to exacerbate conflict and instability.

Among the economic stresses identified by the review were high unemployment, particularly among youth. A survey conducted by the World Bank in countries affected by conflicts indicated that unemployment and idleness were cited by survey respondents as the most important factor motivating young people to join protest movements. The review also found that social stresses, including disparity and discrimination in both opportunity and income could generate conflicts.

On a similar note, environmental stresses such as drought or flooding, could result in crop failures and loss of livelihood, increasing poverty and fueling displacement of people. These factors then directly or indirectly cause, or aggravate, conflicts. Besides sustainable development stresses, other factors, including injustice and discrimination in terms of ethnic or religious competition, human rights violations, and external invasion, can also fuel conflicts.

Based on these findings a consensus was reached that the post-2015 development agenda as outlined in the 17 SDGs should be firmly anchored in human rights and universally accepted values and principles of peace and stability. In particular, SDG 16 aims to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.

In today's world, raked by crises and conflicts on multiple fronts, the relevance and the need to support the United Nations and to develop policies and strategies that break the vicious cycle between conflict and sustainable development stresses, and reinforce a virtuous cycle between development and peace and stability, has never been higher.

However, reading or watching recent headline news, it is quite relevant to ask ourselves whether 'We, the people of the United Nations', have lived up to the ideals, values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter that we ratified more than seven decades ago. The annual celebration of UN Day offers the opportunity for the global community to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter that have guided and stood us in good stead since 1945.

erty and denial of human rights may not be direct causes of social and political conflicts or humanitarian upheavals, they undoubtedly increase the risk of instability and violence. Similarly, while war and humanitarian atrocities are far from the only reasons that countries are trapped in poverty, they definitely set back the development agenda.

More generally, people in the conflict-affected countries are not only deprived of their rights to live in dignity and seek opportunities to develop, they are also more likely to be impoverished, unable to pursue education, and denied access to basic health services and other public goods. Countries which are well-governed and respect the human rights of their citizens were found to be better at avoiding conflicts and overcoming obstacles to development.

The review also found that while conflicts disrupt and hamper progress towards achieving the MDGs and other development goals, the causality also runs the other way. Development

Finance minister calls for joint efforts by public, private sectors

Kuwaiti Finance Minister Fahad Al-Jarallah stressed on the importance of concerted efforts between public and private sectors in order to highlight the promising investment climate in the State of Kuwait, especially while attending various regional and international forums.

The minister's comments came following his visit to the pavilion of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the Kuwait Authority for Public-Private Partnership (KAPP) in the Eighth World Investment Forum organized

by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held from in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi from 16-20 October.

He added that highlighting the image of the Kuwaiti investment scene is a responsibility for all concerned bodies to help shed light on the potential for international investment in Kuwait's investment map in Kuwait, he added.

Pointing out the importance of participating in regional and international forums, Al-Jarallah said that it would help attract foreign investments, expand



cooperation with markets in the world, and keep pace with developments and

investment and technical activity in a way that enhances sustainable development in Kuwait.

The World Investment Forum aims to facilitate dialogue and action on global and emerging investment and development challenges. It also discusses the main investment challenges resulting from multiple global crises, revitalizing investment in food security, and the transition to low carbon energy, health systems, supply chain resilience, and how to enhance productive capacities in the poorest countries.

ITL World wins 'Leading Travel Management Company' award



ITL World has been awarded 'Leading Travel Management Company in Kuwait', for their exceptional performance and excellence in quality and reliability, by the World Travel Awards at a glittering ceremony held at The Atlantis Royal in Dubai, on 15 October.



The World Travel Awards is a credible hallmark of the travel and hospitality industry. The awards are voted for by travel and tourism professionals worldwide, and shows the commitment and excellence ITL World has demonstrated over the years.

In his comments on the occasion, Chairman & Managing Director, ITL World, Dr Siddeek Ahmed, said, "We are thrilled to be recognized

once again at the World Travel Awards Middle East Gala 2023 — the world's leading travel industry award programmes. I'm personally super proud to have ITL World acknowledged and recognized on this global stage."

Chief Executive Officer, ITL World, Rafeeq Mohammed, added, "We continue to remain agile in our approach to supporting our clients, whilst we continue to grow and evolve ensuring we meet dynamic customer requirements. This award further cements and showcases the determination of our highly skilled expert team to continually deliver above and beyond industry expectations, and to set new standards of excellence year after year."

For her part, Director ITL World Kuwait, Najida Abdulla said, "To be recognized by the travel industry's peak body, and by our industry peers, as the 'Best Travel Management Company' is exceptionally rewarding. This is once again a collective achievement and I take the opportunity to thank our clients, partners and colleagues for helping us win this prestigious award."

Since its official launch in 1998, ITL World has prided itself on being a game-changer in the industry. From being rated as one of the powerful travel management companies in the Middle East, to being a consecutive Superbrand winner, to having the regional industry's most consistent client retention rate, in addition to maintaining its strategic and exclusive partnership with award winning Global Travel Conglomerate - CTM, the company's commitment to excellence has remained steadfast.



ALSAYER Group Emerges as Winner in the 16th Arabia CSR Awards, Celebrating Sustainable Excellence in the Arab World

ALSAYER Group, was announced as the winner of the prestigious 16th cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards during the event, widely recognized as the 'Green Oscars of the Middle East,' that took place recently, at the esteemed Anantara Downtown Hotel in Dubai. ALSAYER's exceptional dedication towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability propelled them to secure the top position among 41 distinguished 'Sustainability Champions' from across the Arab world.

Under the esteemed patronage of H.H. Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and Member of the Executive Council of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah, the 16th Arabia CSR Awards presented ALSAYER Group with the coveted first place. The esteemed awards program, organized by the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN), commended ALSAYER's continuous commitment to improving practices encompassing the four main pillars of Economy, Society, Nature, and Wellbeing.

Mr. Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member & Chairman of Sustainability Committee at ALSAYER Group, expressed immense pride in being recognized among the winners in the Middle East. He attributed this success to ALSAYER's adherence to international benchmarks such as the UN Global Compact principles, Global Reporting Initiative Standards, the European Foundation for Quality Management model, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The iterative methodology employed by ALSAYER Group has proven pivotal in refining their sustainability strategies and blueprints each year. The Arabia CSR Awards and its esteemed jury assessment have played a crucial role in enriching knowledge and proficiency in Environmental, Social, and Governance practices for our organization.

During the gala event, Habiba Al Mar'ashi,

Founder, President, and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, emphasized that the Arabia CSR Awards transcend traditional recognition programs. Serving as a dynamic platform, it enhances education, proficiency, and the dissemination of best practices. By showcasing champions and role models within the Arab world, the awards align perfectly with the UAE's Year of Sustainability in 2023. This critical juncture invites businesses and individuals to make sustainable choices in their operations and lives, wholeheartedly embracing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The



Arabia CSR Awards have earned immense credibility, respect, and recognition through the incorporation of international frameworks and principles such as the 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact, Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, GRI Standards framework, EFQM business excellence model, and the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

ALSAYER Group extends its sincere gratitude to the Arabia CSR Network for organizing this esteemed event and recognizing the efforts of entities and organizations in enhancing sustainability measures. ALSAYER remains committed to pioneering sustainability initiatives and fostering lasting, positive change for everyone, today and in the future.

Jazeera Airways ramps up Kuwait - Colombo Flights

Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, has elevated its Kuwait - Colombo flight frequency to daily, effective 10 October 2023. Jazeera Airways initially launched operations from Kuwait to Colombo in 2021, with two weekly flights catering to the large expat Sri Lankan community as well as enthusiastic tourists in the country.

By operating direct flights to Colombo and back, Jazeera Airways provides the expat

population as well as tourists from Kuwait with a convenient and affordable option to visit Sri Lanka. Tourists from the Middle East, Russia and CIS can also connect to Colombo via Kuwait with a smooth and comfortable layover at the Jazeera Terminal 5.

Rohit Ramachandran, Chief Executive Officer, Jazeera Airways said "We are pleased to increase the frequency of Jazeera Airways flights to Colombo. This move to daily flights not only reflects our



dedication to fostering seamless travel but also underscores our commitment to strengthening the ties between Kuwait and Sri Lanka, facilitating both business and leisure travelers in their journeys between the two vibrant nations."

Jazeera serves a network of 64 destinations across the Middle East, South and Central Asia, Africa and Europe, also making it a good choice for connecting to beyond destinations from Sri Lanka.

The Psychology of Decision-Making in the Digital Era



By Fiona Lobo
Head – Training & Development
Mindtree International, Kuwait.

In today's evolving digital geography, the psychology behind decision-making is witnessing a profound metamorphosis. The omnipresence of technology and the internet have introduced new challenges and openings that impact our daily choices. This article explores the intricate interplay between psychology and decision-making in the digital era, throwing light on the underpinning factors that shape our choices and offering strategies to make further informed opinions.

Factors that affect Decision-Making

1. Information Load: One of the most significant shifts in the digital age is the constant deluge of information from various online sources. This information load can overwhelm individuals, leading to decision fatigue. The sheer volume of data available makes it quite difficult to sift through and make well-considered choices.

2. Effect of Social Media: Social media platforms have revolutionized how we interact with information and make opinions. Addictive designs and algorithms are created to utilize cognitive impulses, encouraging impulsive decisions like endless scrolling, or clicking on clickbait articles.

3. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): The feeling of potentially missing out on something is a wonder that our brain creates, and in the digital age, it can become even stronger. It can spark anxiety and prompt people to form hasty decisions, whether buying certain products, attending events, or joining trends without careful consideration. FOMO-driven decisions are frequently driven by the desire to stay socially connected and applicable in the digital world.

4. Choice Overload: Online platforms offer an endless array of options, which can lead to choice overload. When faced with numerous choices, individuals can witness decision palsy, making it challenging to arrive at a decision that aligns with their values and preferences.

5. Online Evidence Bias: Evidence bias, a well-established cognitive bias, is accentuated in the digital age. People tend to seek information that confirms their beliefs, reinforcing their impulses and potentially leading to misinformed decisions.

6. Anonymity: In the digital world, anonymity can lead people to act differently than in person. This can impact decision-making as people may act impulsively or recklessly when shielded by the screen.

7. Algorithm-Driven Recommendations: Digital platforms like Netflix, Amazon etc. use algorithms to give substantiated content and product recommendations. While accessible, these algorithms subtly impact our choices by shaping the content we view and the products we buy.

8. Instant Gratification: Social media platforms provide instant gratification through likes, shares, and comments. This system is based on a cost that can create a cycle of decision-making driven by the need for immediate validation, which can affect our choices online.

- Strategies to better our Decision-Making
- People can improve their decision-making skills in the digital age to make better choices. This includes:
- Being mindful of their digital consumption
- Setting boundaries for screen time
- Carefully evaluating the information, they encounter and
- Make informed and thoughtful decisions.
- By doing so, individuals can navigate the challenges of the digital age with great success and confidence.

The field of decision-making psychology in the digital age is complex and constantly evolving. As we navigate an increasingly disconnected world, it is vital to understand the factors that influence our choices and to adopt strategies for making decisions that align with our values and beliefs. By gaining insights into the psychology behind decision-making in the digital age, we can navigate the digital landscape more effectively and with greater civility.



South African Ambassador visits The Times Kuwait office

Ambassador of South Africa H.E. Manelisi Genge visited The Times Kuwait office and met with Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza last week. Several issues pertaining to the present regional developments

were discussed. Ambassador Genge also highlighted his country's strong relations with Kuwait and intent to further develop these ties through exchange of high ranking visits.

Classification change raises nursing staff allowances

Minister of Health, Dr. Al-Awadhi, has given the green light to implement a significant change in the job classification of nursing staff employed by the ministry.

The reclassification, which aims to streamline and improve working efficiency in the nursing system, will cut the three category (A-B-C) division of nursing staff to just two (A-B). The new system will also result in enhanced allowance for about 10,000 nursing staff by boosting their monthly allowance by KD50.

The new adjustment will primarily witness the recategorization of 599 out of the total 697 Kuwaiti nurses from category B to A, and 98 transitioning from category C to B, with the monthly KD50 allowance applicable uniformly to all recipients of this reclassification.

For the non-Kuwaiti nursing workforce, this reclassification is expected to have a wide-reaching impact. A total of 4,200 non-Kuwaiti nurses will see their category shift from B to A" alongside 3,702 nurses moving from category



C to B. In total, 7,902 non-Kuwaiti nurses are to receive an increase of KD50 in their monthly allowances.

The reclassification also encompasses an additional group of 601 non-Kuwaiti nurses who serve under the bonus clause. This group will also experience a transition, with 401 nurses moving from category B to A, and 200 nurses advancing from category C to B, accompanied by the KD50 increase in their monthly allowance.

MEW considering direct tendering of critical utility projects

Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW) is reportedly considering scrapping three electricity and water projects that were initially intended to be presented through the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), and instead presenting them for direct contracting. This move is part of the various strategies that the ministry is said to be exploring to expedite the implementation of critical utility projects.

The three projects being considered for direct contracting include the second phase of the Al-Zour North Power Plant Project, the first phase of the Al-Khairan Power Plant Project, and the Al-Shaqaya Renewable Energy Project.

The speedy completion of these projects is strategically important for the ministry due to increasing demand for electricity and water in the country amid strained supply options. It is projected that once the two integrated power and water projects come online they will yield a combined 4,000 megawatts of power and over 150 million gallons of water per day, while the Al-Shaqaya renewable energy project is expected to



provide an additional 4,500 megawatts of power to the national grid.

The global consulting firm responsible for crafting the documentation for the Al-Shaqaya project has completed the feasibility study and awaits a decision from the Supreme Committee. Simultaneously, a dedicated global consultant is in the process of preparing tender documents for the Al-Zour and Al-Khairan projects. The Partnership Projects Authority had previously issued an invitation for interested companies to participate in implementation of these two projects.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

What COP28 can achieve



Geoffrey Heal

Professor of Social Enterprise at Columbia Business School and a professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

COP season is almost here. For the climate-conscious, the annual Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is a fixture of the late-year calendar and an opportunity to take stock of our goals, needs, and achievements. We spend two weeks preoccupied with a distant event hoping that negotiators will make meaningful progress toward mitigating the climate threat. But to keep our expectations for COP28 realistic, we must understand what a COP can and cannot do.

We are steadily decarbonizing our economies. Within a decade, wind and solar power will be the major sources of electricity, and sales of electric vehicles (EVs) are likely to overtake those with internal combustion engines. According to the International Energy Agency, the world's fossil-fuel consumption will start falling by 2030. Though this is probably too late to limit the global temperature increase to 2° Celsius, let alone 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels, it is sooner than one would have expected only a short time ago.

But little of this progress is directly attributable to COPs, including COP21 in 2015, from which the Paris climate agreement emerged. In fact, the Paris agreement specifies nothing about EVs or wind or solar power. Instead, it is Tesla that is responsible for the growth of EV sales: the commercial success of the company's Model S drove other high-end automakers to develop the competitive products which are now debuting.

“

We are steadily decarbonizing our economies. Within a decade, wind and solar power will be the major sources of electricity, and sales of electric vehicles (EVs) are likely to overtake those with internal combustion engines.

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Is there any connection between COPs and Tesla's success? If there is, it is not direct. During its early growth stages, Tesla benefited greatly from the United States' Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulations, which enabled it to sell zero-emissions credits to other manufacturers. The revenues from ZEC sales sometimes surpassed those of car sales.

The CAFE regulations date back to 1975, two decades before the first COP was held. They have, however, been tightened over time, a process that might partly reflect increased awareness, fostered by the COPs, of the climate



challenge. Similarly, the COPs might have encouraged the subsidies, in both the US and the European Union, from which Tesla has benefited more recently, after it had already become a major force in the auto industry.

As for solar and wind, the sharp decline in costs has driven their dramatic growth. From 2009 to 2019, the cost of solar power fell from \$0.36 per kilowatt-hour to \$0.03. This decline is attributable to two main factors: economies of scale, which lowered the costs of producing each silicon wafer, and learning by doing, which led to more efficient – and thus cheaper – manufacturing processes. Both factors sustain a virtuous cycle: as the use of solar power increases, costs come down, further accelerating the adoption of solar power.

This process was kicked off by Germany's adoption of generous feed-in tariffs for solar power in 2000. The Chinese government subsequently began investing heavily in solar, which it identified as a strategically important industry. Again, these important policy moves could have been encouraged by the increased awareness of climate change generated by COP meetings.

For offshore wind, the decline in costs has been driven largely by Ørsted and Equinor, two Scandinavian companies that leveraged their offshore oil and gas expertise to develop offshore wind farms, which use many of the same technologies. Government subsidies helped the nascent technology to become commercially viable.

In short, progress on decarbonization has primarily reflected technological breakthroughs brought about by for-profit ventures with the help and guidance of supportive government policies. Those policies might have been crystallized by the discussions at, and publicity surrounding, the COPs, though they were not the result of specific directives from those meetings or contained in the Paris agreement.

So, what should we hope emerges from COP28? COPs can produce two types of positive outcomes. The first are 'big picture' outcomes, such as maintaining pressure on governments and corporations to reduce emissions. Here, it is important not only to reiterate the importance of reaching zero emissions and highlight how far we have yet to go, but also to recognize the progress that has already been made.

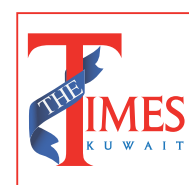
The second type of outcome is more granular. This year's COP must mark the beginning of a process that will clarify what constitutes a valid carbon offset. Many corporations are currently expecting to reduce, but not eliminate, their emissions, on the assumption that they can buy carbon offsets to take them to net-zero. But the world obviously cannot get to zero emissions, the ultimate goal, if anyone is still emitting.

Equally important, it has lately become

clear that many voluntary carbon offsets are worthless, as they do not meet the standard of additionality (the guarantee that the relevant emissions reductions would not have occurred without support from carbon credit sales) or avoid leakage (the shifting of emissions elsewhere). An international body must set clear standards for the validity of offsets and impose limits on their use, and the UNFCCC is

the obvious candidate.

COP28 has the potential to encourage further climate action, including the introduction or strengthening of policies that can lead to emissions-reducing technological breakthroughs, as well as to deliver a much-needed rulebook on important technical issues, such as the use of offsets. Whether it succeeds depends entirely on execution.



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Making the International Financial System Work



Chrysoula Zacharopoulou and Rania Al-Mashat

Chrysoula Zacharopoulou is French Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships.

Rania Al-Mashat is Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation.

In the last two years, a series of international summits have focused on the future of global financial architecture. But as we convened in Marrakech for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, many were asking whether it made sense to try to fix the existing system. Some were already convinced that this is neither possible nor desirable.

Let us prove them wrong.

We arrived in Marrakech four months after leaders gathered in Paris for the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, where they laid out four principles that should guide our global efforts. The pillars of the so-called Paris Pact for People and the Planet echoed the finance-related outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) that took place in Sharm El-Sheikh seven months earlier; and they animated the negotiations at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, and the recently concluded UN General Assembly in New York.

What are these principles? First, no country should have to choose between fighting extreme poverty and fighting the climate crisis. Second, country ownership of development and

climate-transition strategies is essential, with each country charting its own path according to its specific national circumstances. Third, a shock of concessional finance is needed. And fourth, private investment must be leveraged to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Do we need figures to appreciate what the Paris Pact has achieved so far? On concessional finance: G20 leaders agreed in September to unlock \$200 billion in additional lending firepower from multilateral development banks (MDBs).

Do we need voices to attest to how fast the global financial system is changing for the better? Here we are. We come from very different countries, Egypt and France, but we are united by the knowledge that we can indeed reshape the existing global financial

their allocations to the countries that needed the funding most. France went even further, scaling up its reallocation ratio to 40 percent.

Three years ago, who would have thought that all the largest bilateral creditors would coordinate on sovereign-debt treatment for countries hit by a debt crisis? And yet, in 2020, creditors from across the G20, including China, the United States, and the Paris Club, came together to do just that, and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments was born. Though it remains a work in progress, the Common Framework has already done considerable good, such as for Chad and Zambia.

Two years ago, climate-finance negotiations were still paralyzed by a thorny issue: developed economies' delay in delivering the \$100 billion in annual support for climate-change mitigation and adaptation they had promised to their

decided to include climate-related clauses in their loans and now allow countries to suspend debt servicing when facing climate disasters.

Two years ago, we lacked an innovative toolbox to establish development partnerships in line with the national priorities of the supported country, as per the 'country ownership principle'. Now, 'country platform' is becoming the new normal. Having served on both sides of such negotiations, we can tell you that this new approach is working. Egypt showed the way with its Nexus of Water, Food, and Energy (NWFE) program, launched at COP27. France and other development partners have worked this way with Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa, and Vietnam, among others, to build Just Energy Transition Partnerships, which support these countries as they move along their respective paths away from fossil fuels or coal.

Two years ago, who could have foreseen a consensus on reforms to the international financial architecture? And yet we enacted game-changing advances in Marrakesh. Echoing the Paris Pact adopted in June, we confirmed that we want to eradicate poverty and ensure a livable planet, and we agreed to further financial support for global public goods, such as public health.

This year's spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington unlocked an additional \$50 billion for the World Bank. In Marrakesh, some countries launched innovative instruments to boost the Bank's capacity even further.

Almost a year after COP27 in Egypt, the 2023 annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank, hosted by Morocco, proved it once again: where there is political will, there is a way forward. We can make meaningful progress toward a fairer, more efficient international financial system. Rather than attempt to work outside the system by creating alternative fora, we must make the system we have work.

“Two years ago, we lacked a toolbox to establish development partnerships in line with the national priorities of the supported country, as per the ‘country ownership principle’. Now, ‘country platform’ is becoming the new normal.”

architecture. In fact, in just the past few years, we have witnessed major steps toward that end. We will keep carrying that effort forward.

Two years ago, for example, the implementation of a global fiscal stimulus to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic seemed a formidable challenge. But we managed to reach a global agreement that led to the historic issuance of \$650 billion worth of special drawing rights (SDRs, the IMF's reserve currency), and secured a commitment from developed economies to channel 20 percent of

developing-country counterparts. At COP27 in Egypt, we overcame this issue and even agreed to create new financial arrangements, sponsored by the European Union, to address loss and damage.

Two years ago, few would have imagined that climate vulnerabilities would be integrated into the core of MDBs' operating models. Yet today, the largest such institutions, such as the World Bank, are making progress toward this goal. Moreover, some bilateral development partners, such as France and the United Kingdom, have



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Compensating Community-Health Workers



Lennie Bazira and Prossy Muyingo

Lennie Bazira is Policy Director of the Community Health Impact Coalition.

Prossy Muyingo is a community-health worker in Uganda and was named a 2023 Heroine of Health by Women in Global Health.

At least six million women worldwide provide unpaid or grossly underpaid labor in community-health centers, often in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Many work as community-health workers. But, though this is a skilled job that should be salaried, only 34 countries offer CHWs accreditation, training, and salaries, leaving the majority exploited and therefore less effective for their patients. If we are serious about making 'health for all' a global priority, this must change.

CHWs are crucial to strengthening health systems at the national level: they have been proven to improve maternal- and child-health services, expand access to family planning, and support prevention and care for both non-communicable and infectious diseases. Deploying CHWs who consistently provide just 30 lifesaving health services in countries with the highest disease burden would save as many as 6.9 million lives annually and reduce child mortality by almost half. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how resilient community-health programs can provide essential services even in the face of great adversity.

“

Deploying community health workers who consistently provide just 30 lifesaving health services in countries with the highest disease burden would save as many as 6.9 million lives annually and reduce child mortality by almost half.

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But such programs will reach their full potential only with service design that adheres to evidence-based best practices. That means treating CHWs as professionals who require training, fair pay, and safe working conditions. When used as a stopgap solution or a source of cheap labor, CHWs are less effective than their well-resourced counterparts.

In Africa, up to 85 percent of CHWs are unpaid, and, worldwide, CHWs' essential medicines are out of stock one-third of the time. In Uganda, our home country, there is a shortage of health-care workers, so CHWs have stepped up to fill the gap. Though these workers provide vital



services to their communities, performing many of the same tasks as their salaried supervisors, they often receive little or no pay.

Why are CHWs, who are often women of color, expected to work and save lives without recognition or remuneration? It is clear that this is also a gender-rights issue. Patriarchal norms and power dynamics condition women to accept no or low wages for what should clearly be paid work. For example, women from low-income households and with low levels of education often view this type of unpaid work as an opportunity that might lead to paid work or an asset like a mobile phone or bicycle. Unpaid work in health care can also bring women social recognition. In many contexts, it is seen as honorable work that families will approve of for a woman. As a result, CHWs tend to juggle these positions with piecemeal paid jobs and family responsibilities.

These women face an unenviable dilemma: If they give up their work as CHWs to find full-time employment that can support them, who will provide much-needed health care for their communities? Backed into a corner by systemic inequalities and traditional gender roles, they often continue to overextend themselves, sacrificing stability, economic security, career progression, and their own well-being in the process.

To redress this entrenched social and economic injustice, professional CHWs must become the norm, not the exception. At minimum, CHWs must be accredited to ensure that certain standards are met; paid a competitive wage; continuously trained and supported by a dedicated supervisor; and integrated into health systems, including primary health-care facilities and wider monitoring and evaluation systems. That way, they can be proactive in surveillance and see patients without point-of-care user fees. In short, CHWs must be salaried, skilled, supervised, and supplied.

After years of being marginalized and isolated, CHWs are now organizing and establishing in-country networks, largely using digital technology, to achieve these goals. More than 5,000 CHWs and aligned health organizations across 40 countries have come together via the Community Health Impact Coalition to translate shared research and advocacy work into policy change at the national level. Our shared mission is to ensure that all LMICs, including Uganda, adopt policies for professional CHWs.

The global community must decide whether it will fairly compensate those who, for decades, have propped up health systems in LMICs, or continue to exploit a largely female workforce. The moral choice is clear. Countries

that professionalize CHWs and integrate them into a robust health infrastructure will be in the best position to make progress toward 'health for all', including for the women delivering the bulk of the care.

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Thought for the week

“ World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just mere absence of violence. Peace is, I think, the manifestation of human compassion.

- Dalai Lama XIV

Intestinal Gas and Flatulence

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Loud gas burps and flatulence, especially in public, are undoubtedly embarrassing.

Overeating, eating too quickly, excessive consumption of soft drinks and alcohol, emotional stress, talking or drinking are all factors linked to generating intestinal gases and flatulence.

However, the major reason for generating undesirable intestinal responses are the type of foods that one eats. Lactose (the sugar found in dairy products), is one such product that people who are very sensitive to it cannot digest. Some of the other foods that cause gas and flatulence in people include cabbage, beans, lentils, broccoli, onion, radish and green pepper.

Luckily, with certain adjustments in our food choices and eating habits, this embarrassing situation can be eliminated. Below are a few tips in this regard:



Do not overeat; stop eating before you are full, not after.

- Chew the food you eat, slowly and thoroughly, so you enjoy the taste, texture and flavors of the foods you are consuming.
- Avoid talking when you eat, as air will dissipate into your intestines causing flatulence and bloating.
- Chew a sprig of parsley after your meals.
- Identify if there are certain foods you eat that lead to gas and flatulence, and if possible eliminate them from your diet.
- Decrease or eliminate the consumption of soft drinks, as these are full of gas, and you certainly do

not need extra gas in your intestine. Some people drink 7up or Perrier water when feeling full and bloated, but these drinks contain gases and just worsen the situation.

- While fiber is good for the body, it may increase bloating. Stop eating foods that are high in fiber, until you feel comfortable.
- Having yogurt can help the digestive process as it is loaded with probiotics- and prebiotics.
- Ginger has been shown to promote the flow of digestive juices in the intestinal tract, and this is an excellent process that supports the digestive system.
- Peppermint, fennel and anise based teas are very useful as well. They contain flatulence-relieving properties.
- Fennel, in particular, needs special mention as this herb is used in many natural remedies that treat constipation and bloating. Fennel seeds provide quick relief from many digestive disorders like intestinal cramps, acid indigestion and gases.
- Add fennel to your salads and stews if they contain veggies that cause gas formation, to decrease this gassy effect on you.

Every condition has its solution. Eat Smart, Live Well!

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

RECIPE

Sorghum Nuggets



Sorghum is a staple food in many parts of the world. With its hearty texture and a mild, nutty flavor, and the fact that it pops just like corn, allows sorghum to be used in various recipes like cereals, pilafs, and salads. The grain is also a nutritious food that is rich in protein, dietary fiber, B vitamins, and minerals.

Total time: 30 to 40 minutes

Serving: 8 people

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup whole sorghum
- 1 1/2 cup potatoes boiled and grated
- 1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella/Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 1/2 tsp pepper powder
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp mixed herbs
- 1/2 tsp chaat Masala
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste (optional)
- 2 tbsps parsley (finely chopped)

For the coating:

- 1/4 cup sorghum flour
- 1/4 tsp pepper crushed
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup water
- oil for deep frying

Instructions:

- Wash and soak the sorghum in water overnight or for a minimum of six hours
- Drain the sorghum and place it in a pressure cooker along with salt and water.
- Pressure cook for 4-5 whistles.
- Drain into a colander
- Rinse the cooked sorghum well, fluff with a fork and set aside
- Transfer the cooled sorghum to a large bowl, along with boiled grated potatoes, cheese, ginger-garlic paste, chili flakes, mixed herbs, pepper, chaat masala, salt, chopped parsley, and mix well to form a smooth dough
- Add 1/4 cup bread crumbs to coat the dough mixture and set aside
- Mix the sorghum flour, pepper, salt and water to form a smooth slurry
- Pinch a small ball sized dough from the sorghum mix and form a cylindrical shape
- Dip in the slurry to cover all sides and then roll it in bread crumbs
- Deep fry, shallow fry, or pan fry the sorghum cylinders in hot oil
- Flip and fry on all sides over medium flame till it turns golden and crisp
- Drain over kitchen paper to remove excess oil and serve sorghum nuggets with tomato sauce or green chutney.
- For a more healthy version of the nuggets, you can avoid the oil frying process and instead bake at 180°C for 25 minutes



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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

Global stroke deaths expected to soar

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO), reveals that nearly 15 million people worldwide are affected by stroke each year. Of those, around 5 million die and another 5 million become permanently disabled. Stroke is the second leading cause of death globally. A new study warns that these numbers are expected to increase by 50 percent by 2050, and that much of this stroke burden will be borne by low- and middle-income (LMI) countries.

A stroke, or more technically a brain stroke, occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain is blocked by a clot, or ruptures. When a clot blocks blood flow, the brain cells in the affected area do not receive oxygen and die within minutes. Similarly, when a blood vessel bursts, blood overflows into the neighboring area increasing pressure that damages the surrounding blood cells.

A stroke arising from a blocked artery is referred to as an ischemic stroke, while a stroke caused by rupture of a blood vessel is called hemorrhagic stroke. A transient ischemic attack (TIA), often termed a 'mini stroke', is caused by a temporary clot. Strokes are also classified by the specific area of the brain that is affected. Around 87 percent of strokes are ischemic in nature, and the rest are hemorrhagic strokes.

A stroke is a serious medical condition that requires immediate emergency care.



Time is critical in stroke treatment, with survival and recovery drastically reduced if a person is not treated for a stroke within hours of having one. Being able to get to a hospital and be treated with clot-busting drugs or surgery immediately is critically important. As Emergency Medical Staff (EMS) often say, 'Time lost is a lost heart'.

A new report published last week in the academic journal Lancet, states that stroke could become a significant public health issue over the next 30 years, with strokes set to occur among everyone, everywhere, including increasingly in younger people.

Global stroke experts estimate that by 2050, around 91 percent of stroke deaths — 8.8 million people — will occur in LMI

countries, compared with 86 percent today. Meanwhile, stroke deaths in high-income countries are expected to remain at around 900,000, further widening the disparity gap between the two groups.

Experts say that one of the reasons for a rise in prevalence of strokes is that known risk factors for stroke are increasingly being left unaddressed by people and policymakers in many places. These risk factors include sedentary lifestyles and high calorie processed foods that lead to an increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity, as well as a rise in type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure among people in many parts of the world.

The report explains that another factor involved in the projected increase in stroke numbers in the years ahead is the phenomena of epidemiological transition — which describes the changes in patterns of population distributions in relation to changes in the pattern of fertility, mortality, life expectancy, and leading causes of death. For instance, hemorrhagic stroke is now seen to occur more commonly in some LMI countries and among Asians.

Additional indications of epidemiological

transition include the fact that people in LMI countries are now generally living longer than before, which also means that there are a larger number of older people in these nations, who are potentially vulnerable to strokes. LMI countries are also less well-equipped than richer nations to tackle strokes, which then leads to even more stroke fatalities in these countries.

Moreover, the resources an individual has access to after receiving acute treatment is a major determinant in the chances of recovering without becoming disabled; these resources are far fewer in most LMI states. The report estimates the global direct costs of stroke and loss of income due to the disabling nature of the condition, will more than double to \$2.31 trillion by 2050. Asian and African countries are expected to feel the bulk of these economic impacts.

Physicians and healthcare personnel say the most important thing to keep in mind is that the majority of strokes are not inevitable; they are preventable, and the best time to address it is to start now. Individuals can play a role in reducing their own stroke risk by not smoking, exercising regularly, eating a diet that is low in processed food and high in vegetables, and managing existing conditions, including type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

But for big shifts to happen, change will also need to occur at the systemic level. With social determinants of health — factors like access to healthcare, healthy food, and where a person lives — likely to account for higher stroke burdens in segments of the population, as well as higher stroke burden in low- and middle-income, government level interventions through health policies and processes to improve stroke outcomes will be needed. countries through health policy and process interventions by the government.



Excessive prescription drug usage a health concern

A new study on prescription drug usage in the United States by researchers at Penn State University in the US, reveals that an American born in 2019 will spend a larger share of their lifetime taking prescription drugs than being married or receiving an education. The study found that American males will spend approximately 48 percent of their lives taking prescription drugs, with this number jumping to 60 percent for females.

Being aware of the medications you are using, and how long you can expect to take them to control or overcome a health condition, is important in determining the implications that prescription drugs could have on your body over the long term. The study, which showed the central role that prescription drugs have taken in our lives, noted that the time people now spend taking prescription drugs is higher than what they spend in their first marriage, or in getting an education, or being engaged in the labor force.

For their study the researchers used data from surveys in the US conducted by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 1996 through 2019 to study prescription drug use across states in America. The researchers then used mortality data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the

Human Mortality Database in the US to estimate how long Americans born in 2019 could expect to live. They then combined this information with the survey data to estimate the percent of their lifetime that the participants could expect to spend taking prescription medications.

The study found that the majority of American men are taking prescription drugs by age 40, while most American women are taking prescription drugs by age 15. On average, a newborn boy in 2019 could expect to take prescription drugs for approximately 37 years, or 48 percent of his life. A newborn girl in 2019 could expect to take them for approximately 47.5 years, or 60 percent of her life.

The study explained that women start taking prescription drugs earlier than men do, with some of this early usage being related to birth control and hormonal contraceptives, as well as the greater use of psychotherapeutic drugs used to treat conditions such as depression, anxiety and ADHD among women. Men, on the other hand, tend to take more statins and other medications to treat cardiovascular disease, with the statin use varying across race and ethnicity, she said.

The study also found that rates of polypharmacy — when an individual takes five or more drugs at the same time — have risen to alarming levels. In the mid-1990s, most people taking prescription medications were on one drug. Today, individuals taking prescription medications are equally likely to be taking five or more medications.

The findings have implications for Americans' health and health care expenditures. Many of the drugs that individuals are on for 40 or 50 years have only been on the market for the past five decades, so their long-term effects on the body are still unknown. Additionally, polypharmacy puts the individual at greater risk for drug interactions and adverse health outcomes. A related study found that US prescription drug expenditures hit \$335 billion in 2018, and that this figure is projected to increase to \$875 billion, or 15.4 percent of national health expenditures, by 2026.

While prescription drugs have made a significant difference in treating many health conditions, there are growing concerns on how much of this usage is too much. Despite the increase in usage of prescription medications, several studies have shown that Americans are less healthy and live shorter lives today, than their counterparts in other high-income countries.

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