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Parliament convenes with hopes of less friction, more function



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

With the second session of the 17th legislative term of the National Assembly currently underway, the fervent hope among people is that the parliamentary concord witnessed during the first session will continue to prevail. Detente in relations between the two wings of parliament in the last session had led to consensus on several policies and laws that helped move the wheels of progress forward.

A contentious parliament at odds with the government's policies is the last thing the country needs right now. Although the current high oil prices preclude the need for any immediate measures to rein-in development plans, the state's finances are not as rosy as they appear on the surface. The large surplus recorded in fiscal year 2022-23 are reported to have significantly boosted the reserve assets in the General Reserve Fund (GRF), the state



treasury, which at the end of fiscal year 2021-22 was estimated at around KD8.2 billion.

However, the GRF buffers could face an equally significant withdrawal with a budget

deficit of KD6.4 billion projected for the current fiscal year 2023-24. Any large withdrawal from the GRF is worrisome, given the limited alternative financing options available to the government,

especially since parliament remains vehemently opposed to the public debt law, which would have allowed Kuwait to borrow on international debt markets. In its latest World Economic Outlook report issued at the end of October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted that Kuwait is projected to record a negative growth rate of -0.6 percent in real GDP this year, making it the only Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state to record negative growth in 2023. The IMF also expected the inflation rate in Kuwait to reach 3.4 percent this year, which is the highest among GCC countries.

In its report, the IMF also predicted a slowdown in world economic growth, with figures showing that global growth is poised to slow from 3.5 percent in 2022 to 3.0 percent in 2023 and 2.9 percent in 2024, well below the historical (2000-19) average of 3.8 percent. Slowdown in global growth and higher inflation could have a serious negative impact on Kuwait's economy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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Members of diplomatic corps voice support for Palestine

Ambassadors and heads of mission of several countries gathered last week at the Palestinian embassy, in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people suffering from the continuing Israeli onslaught on their country.

The solidarity meeting, initiated by the Iranian embassy and called for by Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait, the Ambassador of Tajikistan, H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, saw a large gathering of diplomats from Arab states as well as from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. The wide diplomatic presence was a clear message of support for the necessity of halting the killing of innocent civilians in Gaza.

In his speech on the occasion, Ambassador Zubaydov, expressed sincere condolences to the brave Palestinian people for the thousands of civilians who have fallen as martyrs in the military operations and clashes. He condemned targeting unarmed civilians, shelling hospitals and schools, and other civil infrastructure, calling for their immediate cessation. He emphasized the need for a resolution to the Palestinian issue through diplomacy, supporting the Arab initiative calling for a two-state solution and the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem by the 1967 borders.

For his part, Palestinian Ambassador, H.E. Rami Tahboub, thanked his colleagues in the diplomatic community for their solidarity stance with the Palestinian people. The Turkish Ambassador, H.E. Tuba Nur Sumez, stated her



country's support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and decent living.

Egyptian Ambassador, H.E. Osama Shaltout,

thanked Kuwait as a "state of humanity" for building a humanitarian air bridge, sending daily emergency aid to the Palestinian people

through the Rafah border crossing.

He mentioned that Egypt also provided emergency humanitarian aid and built several communication towers to maintain communication between the internal and external regions of Gaza.

The Vatican Ambassador, Archbishop Eugene Nugent, stated, "I came today in the name of humanity to express deep sorrow over the dire situation that the Palestinians are living in." He explained that the Pope and the Vatican condemned this tragedy, and finding a peaceful solution is necessary for both sides.

Overall, the gathering conveyed the importance of solidarity with the Palestinian people and the severity of the current situation in Gaza, highlighting the need for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue.



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IMF predicts negative growth for Kuwait in 2023

The latest World Economic Outlook report issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the end of October, projects Kuwait to record a negative growth rate of -0.6 percent in real GDP this year, making it the only Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state to record negative growth in 2023.

The IMF also expects the inflation rate (according to the average consumer price index) in Kuwait to reach 3.4 percent this year, which is the highest among GCC countries. The projected inflation rates in other GCC states were, 3.1 percent in the UAE, 2.8 percent in Qatar, 2.5 percent in Saudi Arabia, 1.1 percent in Oman, and 1 percent in Bahrain. On the other hand, the IMF ranked Kuwait fourth in the Gulf in terms of per capita GDP (at current dollar prices) at US\$32,220 in 2023, compared to \$81,970 in Qatar, \$50,600 in the UAE, \$32,590 in Saudi Arabia, \$28,460 in Bahrain, and \$21,270 in Oman.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF also stated that global growth is poised to slow from 3.5 percent in 2022 to 3.0 percent in 2023 and 2.9 percent in 2024, well below the



historical (2000-19) average of 3.8 percent. Advanced economies are expected to slow from 2.6 percent in 2022 to 1.5 percent in 2023 and 1.4 percent in 2024 as policy tightening starts to bite. Emerging market and developing economies are projected to have a modest decline in growth from 4.1 percent in 2022 to 4.0 percent in both 2023 and 2024.

In the meantime, global inflation is forecast to decline steadily, from 8.7 percent in 2022 to 6.9 percent in 2023 and 5.8 percent in 2024, due to tighter monetary policy aided by lower international commodity prices. Core inflation is generally projected to decline more gradually, and inflation is not expected to return to target until 2025 in most cases.



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Turkiye commemorates 100th anniversary as a Republic

Turkish Ambassador H.E. Tuba Nur Sonmez held a reception at the Regency Hotel on 29 October to mark the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye. A large gathering of diplomats, businessmen, and a cross-section of the Turkish community in Kuwait attended the celebrations. Chief guest at the event was the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Housing, Faleh Eid Faleh Al Rquba, who cut the celebratory cake along with Ambassador Sonmez to mark the momentous occasion.

In her address to the gathering Ambassador Sonmez pointed out that the Turkish Republic was founded following an unprecedented struggle for independence achieved through the great sacrifices and efforts of the nation. She declared that 100 years on, with its growing economy, robust democracy, commitment to fundamental human values, and principled and visionary foreign policy, Türkiye would continue to be a source of inspiration for the region and the world.

Since its formation in 1923, Türkiye had undergone a process of massive transformation starting under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, into a strong multi-party democratic state with a competing economy, admirable military strength and well-developed infrastructure, said the ambassador.

She further added that looking back it was impossible not to be proud of what they had achieved as a nation in the first century of their republic, from a newly born country reeling from decades of non-stop wars, to a regional power with a robust economy, a strong democracy and a mighty military, the first century of Turkish Republic has proven to be a success.

Ambassador Sonmez also mentioned



that the Century of Türkiye represented a comprehensive set of goals beyond mere description; it was an ambitious vision that promised innovation, inclusivity and sustainable development to shape a future

robust foundations that included strong bonds of friendship marked by mutual trust, sympathy and cultural similarity.

Ambassador Sonmez noted that under the guidance of Turkish President Recept Erdogan

and reached US\$955 million in 2022, which was an all time record. She pointed out the recently signed contract by Kuwait to purchase Turkish Bayraktar TB2 combat drones, which she said were arguably the most popular drones in the world.

Turkey and Kuwait were cooperating in several fields which included tourism, education and health sectors and also Türkiye continued to be the top destination for Kuwaitis.

Ambassador also touched upon the great humanitarian efforts of Kuwait in trying to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people. "As our President Erdogan pointed out, Gaza is not only an issue for those struggling to survive there, but for all of us. Unless we put out this fire immediately, it will take us to a new spiral of violence that threatens the stability of the entire region," she added. The ambassador affirmed that the onus is on the shoulders of the international community to address the root causes of the conflict, including ending the occupation of Palestinian territories and allowing the Palestinians to establish their fully independent state.

“ Growing economy, robust democracy, commitment to fundamental human values, and principled and visionary foreign policy, Türkiye would continue to be a source of inspiration for the region and the world. ”

with a positive global impact.

On relations with Kuwait, the Ambassador noted that although they had a much older historical friendship, 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries would be celebrated next year with several joyful activities. She praised the level of relations with Kuwait as outstanding and were based on

and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, bilateral relations had reached an exemplary level and continue to grow stronger. The friendship between the two leaders had a huge impact on strengthening the bilateral relations.

She revealed that bilateral trade between Türkiye and Kuwait was growing annually

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Veteran shipping executive bids adieu to Kuwait

Indian national C.P. Rajiv Menon, a veteran shipping executive, is bidding adieu to Kuwait after more than two decades with Al Rashed International Shipping. A well known personality who had gained the trust of his colleagues and friends over the years, Rajiv will be missed by the Indian community and in business gatherings, having been an active member in various circles.

Rajiv's foray into the shipping industry in Kuwait gave him a new perspective and recognition, and having excelled in the field with his management skills, helped lead the Al Rashed Shipping to higher levels of growth. As vice-president of corporate

affairs, Rajiv built an impressive track record of delivering excellence to clients, and helped elevate Al Rashed International Shipping to one of the leading shipping companies in the country.

A self-made man with a penchant to succeed, Rajiv has had exposure in different industries from print media to software and education before joining the Al Rashed team. Building on his past knowledge and experience he assisted the organization in taking on new tasks head on.

As a valuable member of the community, Rajiv had never hesitated in joining and supporting several causes of concern, and



his participation has always been available to lend a helping hand to the needy. Always leading from the front, Rajiv will be missed by friends, colleagues and community for his ever helping attitude and support.

Known as a good friend, a great listener and an excellent mentor, Rajiv recalls some of his fondest memories in Kuwait and says that the experience and friendships he has made are worth their weight in gold.

Always looking for new challenges, Rajiv's next move will be in Dubai with Cape Ocean Shipping, a venture he looks forward to building and in raising the bar of his own performances.

Parliament convenes with hopes of less friction, more function

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Slackening growth worldwide could reduce demand for hydrocarbon products and pull down oil prices, straining Kuwait's finances and hampering economic activity in the country. Any appreciable fall in oil demand, amid the reduction in production — as a result of compliance with output quotas set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their non-OPEC allies — could severely dent Kuwait's hydrocarbon exports and revenues.

Moreover, with the government committed to speeding up several major projects, including mega developments in the northern region, a fall in revenues could scuttle or delay these projects and negatively affect the four-year work plan that the government outlined in July, and which it hopes to push forward during the current session of parliament.

Additionally, any tightening of purse strings by the authorities could complicate, if not jeopardize other policies and plans that the government has committed to implementing in cooperation with the National Assembly. Among the issues awaiting parliamentary discussion and resolution are finding a solution to salary discrepancies in the public sector, establishing an Election Commission, and moving the nationality file forward.

Discrepancy in salaries between citizens employed in different state agencies has been a contentious issue in the government sector for long. People doing the same work in different public sector undertakings often receive salaries that vary greatly; in some instances the discrepancy is more than double. The discontent this has bred among affected government employees has contributed to the poor productivity and 'job-hopping' witnessed among workers in the public sector.

Another issue that would need to be tackled during the current session is that of establishing the Electoral Commission (EC). During the first parliamentary session there was consensus between the government and lawmakers on establishing an independent electoral commission. Agreeing to establish an EC was the easy part, now comes the task of fleshing out the details of this important entity — its constituents, mandate, and limits will need to be determined and agreed upon. On the same electoral vein, the authorities will also have to finalize legislation related to the electoral process, as well as realign electoral districts taking into account the development of new residential areas that are coming up in different parts of the country, as well as the population growth among citizens, and the increase in the number of voters in the present constituencies.

The nationality issue also constitutes a long festering challenge that has remained unresolved for far too long. In November of 2022, a decree was issued to form the Supreme Committee for the Realization of Kuwaiti Nationality, to examine applications from people aspiring to acquire Kuwaiti citizenship. The decree stipulated that the Supreme Committee for this purpose will be headed by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, with Minister of Defense, Minister of Justice and the Secretary-General of

the Council of Ministers as members. Nothing much has evolved since the formation of the committee a year ago.

The second parliamentary session clearly has a lot riding on it, and continued concord between government and legislators is vital to achieving them. In his inaugural address at the start of the second parliamentary session of the 17th legislative term on 31 October, the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, reiterated the government's priorities and strategies.

His Highness the Crown Prince also called on citizens to activate their role as parliamentary monitors and question the performances of parliamentarians. Addressing the Kuwaiti people, he said, "You, my fellow countrymen, are required to have a clear, honest and courageous opinion on all issues that MPs may raise, in order to prevent them from claiming wrongful demands as if it was your own, but in fact it is for their personal benefits".

In addition, His Highness pointed out that some parliamentary practices had led to extreme resentment because it did not achieve people's desired aspirations. He stressed on the need for MPs to desist from such practices and instead focus on important matters that reflect citizens' ambitions. He also called on all MPs not to use their parliamentary tools as a means of pressure to swing the people's opinion and occupy them with unnecessary subjects that may not achieve any kind of justice to them.

Speaking on the same occasion, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, took a more conciliatory tone. He stressed that the upcoming period must focus on economic growth aimed at meeting the expectations of Kuwait and its people. The premier called for building trust in the government's abilities to meet the country's aspirations, and emphasized that cooperation between the government and National Assembly must also be built on trust and respect of state institutions and the constitution.

In a further placatory gesture aimed at promoting the ongoing detente in the National Assembly and improving relations with the legislative wing in parliament, Deputy Prime Minister, State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Essa Al-Kandari stated that the government remained committed to its policy of not intervening in parliamentary elections, and its intent on enhancing cooperation and coordination with the assembly.

For his part, Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmad Al-Saadoun also affirmed that the first regular session of the 17th Legislative term had produced several laws in line with the people's desires for development namely in the housing sector, National Assembly election laws, health insurance and providing more benefits for housewives.

Additionally, a day ahead of the inaugural session, the cabinet expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership and the National Assembly for supporting the government's efforts to drive the country's development plans. The cabinet

also commended the government-parliament coordination committee for its efforts in harmonizing relations between the two branches of the state.

On the same vein, during a meeting of legislators on 15 October, lawmakers noted that joint priorities with the government would form the nucleus of upcoming cooperation in parliament. They highlighted a number of issues and laws to be considered in the second session of parliament, including, among others, prioritizing bills to reform the strategic alternative, or the public sector wage structure, pensions, and real estate financing law, and amending electoral laws.

The government has also outlined its priorities that, it said, were in line with its four-year economic framework outlined in July, including development of the northern region; the corporate tax law; the residency law; amendments to tender laws and to the traffic laws; and the real estate financing and mortgage laws. Finding common ground in parliament on their respective priorities will determine the degree of progress on key economic and development objectives.

Despite consensus on issues between the two sides, and the cooperative and conciliatory initiatives from the government, as well as guidance from His Highness the Crown Prince, last week lawmaker Hamdan Al-Azmi presented

a request to grill the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban, for the minister's deemed multiple failures.

In his grilling request, the lawmaker highlighted six issues that form the axis of his interpellation — using the ministerial office to avoid facing fraud charges; neglecting duties and undermining Kuwait's security; wasting public funds through financial and administrative violations; misleading the State Audit Bureau; mismanaging the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development; and, failing to adequately monitor and supervise rising prices.

The grilling motion could very well be the first 'shot across the bow', and an indication that the parliamentary concord witnessed during the first session of the National Assembly should not be taken for granted. It could also be an early sign of potential frictions that could once again hamper relations in parliament. At a time when an effectively functioning parliament is what Kuwait urgently needs, the reemergence of dissension could be most unfortunate.

Discord in the National Assembly would not only upend the government's immediate projects and its four-year work plan outlined during the first parliamentary session, it could also impair trust among people on the government's ability to deliver, on the parliament's ability to function, and in the country's future going ahead.

CITRA plans to launch 'caller name ID', seeks public input

Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) is seeking input from the public on a host of measures that it aims to implement to safeguard mobile users from spurious callers.

The planned measures are outlined in a draft document titled, 'Caller Name Identification' that CITRA has uploaded on its website. The public are free to peruse the document and provide their comments and suggestions, so that valid and feasible recommendations could be considered by the Authority before the measures are adopted. The last date for receiving public feedback is 29 November.

The move aims to help reduce fraudulent calls in the country. According to the statement released by the Authority, the Caller Name Identification feature will allow the recipient of a call to identify the name of the legal entity, whether it be a government agency, private company, or bank, through devices operating on mobile networks in Kuwait.

The initiative is a result of various studies that examined the importance of the service in reducing fraudulent calls and providing assurance to users that the calls they receive are from reliable sources. To prioritize the implementation of this initiative, the



Authority has identified sectors that are most affected by electronic fraud campaigns targeting the country.

Chairman of the Authority's Board of Directors, Omar Al-Omar, emphasized that this initiative reflects the Authority's commitment to improving the security and quality of services in the telecommunications sector and reducing the number of electronic fraud operations that target users.

The Authority has directed telecommunications companies to conduct the necessary tests to ensure the readiness of their networks and control the quality of service.

Oil surges, non-oil activity moderates, equities suffer

Oil prices, which have been on an upward trajectory for much of this year, due to throttling of exports by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and several of their non-OPEC allies amid a rise in demand, received a further boost in October on the back of the ongoing regional turmoil. Meanwhile, non-oil activity has moderated from the steady rise witnessed in previous quarters, even as equities experienced a significant decline in performance.

In its quarterly assessment of Kuwait's economy, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) noted that at the end of the third-quarter of the year, the price of Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) reached US\$98 per barrel, rising by 26 percent compared to the levels recorded at the end of last June. The bank added that the increase in oil prices, which were driven by tightening market fundamentals, could help

boost Kuwait's financial position and increase investment in infrastructure.

However, while the higher oil prices have led to a surge in revenues, the reduction in oil-production, arising from the country's commitment to OPEC-mandated output cuts, represents a major challenge for Kuwait. The country is aiming to make the most of its new Al-Zour refinery, which has a production capacity of about 650,000 barrels of clean fuels per day that are in high-demand in global markets. But faced with cuts to its production, Kuwait has been diverting part of its crude-oil exports to the refinery, thereby lowering export revenues.

In its evaluation of the non-oil sector, the bank maintained that non-oil economic activity has moved at a moderate pace in recent months, and that growth in domestic credit and consumer spending has also slowed compared to prior levels. The economic slow-down and

tighter monetary conditions have impacted the market, with equities declining significantly in the third-quarter of 2023.

Main indices on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KEC) dropped sharply with several leading entities and banking stocks suffering losses in the middle of systematic liquidation by electronic accounts, financial portfolios, and investment funds. Decline in eight sectors led to an appreciable drop in general indicators, with the market value losing KD840 million in just two sessions before monthly closings.

Analysts expect that this decline will majorly impact the performance of investment funds by the end of October, with data indicating they may incur substantial losses. For their part, investment sources indicated that global and regional financial markets are being affected by wars and political developments.

The experts added that the decline of the



KEC can be attributed, among other factors, to the absence of investment alternatives in the market, the lack of flexibility in applying standards and controls on companies, and the need for groups to take the initiative to support their stocks through available tools and provide positive economic data. These factors are essential to provide a suitable environment for the stock market to fully recover.

The bank concluded its quarterly assessment by noting that overall, while Kuwait faces challenges in both the local and international crude oil markets and growth of consumer spending slows, there are several positive developments that could indicate a better economic outlook for the country in the coming year.

Over 40,000 German visit visas issued to Kuwaitis

German Ambassador, H.E. Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz, stated that the consular section of the German Embassy had so far issued 40,000 visas to Kuwaitis since the start of the year, and was likely to surpass the 50,000 visas issued last year.

He added that the increasing number of Kuwaiti visitors to Germany reflected the strong relations between the two countries, and underlined Germany's unique travel destinations and its diverse cultural and historical attractions.

To further boost travel to Germany, the German embassy hosted a German travel and tourism exhibition in Kuwait from 29 October to 2 November titled 'Germany, a unique travel destination', which highlighted places of interest and tourism facilities across Germany.

The exhibition was part of the German travel and tourism road show to cities in the region, including to Jeddah, Riyadh, Doha, and Abu Dhabi. The exhibition aims to introduce German



companies and travel destinations to the local communities and strengthen the strong public relations between the two countries.

The German ambassador noted that in addition to tourism, the two countries are working on a memorandum of understanding

in security, which is expected to enhance bilateral cooperation in the security field. The ambassador highlighted the fact that military cooperation between the two countries is currently limited, but he expressed optimism about the forthcoming security agreement.



He also pointed out that Germany and Kuwait, two friendly nations, will celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year, showcasing the growing cooperation and collaboration between the two countries in various fields.



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Korea, Kuwait share values of freedom, peace and prosperity



Embassy of South Korea hosted a reception at their premises on 1 November to commemorate the country's National Foundation Day and Armed Forces Day. A large gathering of diplomats, businessmen, Korean nationals and friends of Korea attended the celebrations to mark the occasion.

Ambassador of South Korea H.E. Chung Byung-ha cut the ceremonial cake along with the chief guest, Kuwait's Assistant Minister

of Foreign Affairs and Head of Asian Affairs, Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat.

In his address to the gathering Ambassador Byung-ha stated that the two nations shared the values of freedom, peace and prosperity, based on unwavering mutual trust and strong partnership. Rising from the ashes of war, Korea and Kuwait had successfully demonstrated the power of resilience and the strength of collective will for better life.

He noted that the establishment of their

diplomatic relationship went back to 1979. But even before that a Korean company named Daerim Construction broke ground on its first project here in 1975, which followed the Korean trade representative office that had been set up here in 1972. He revealed that Kuwait was the first country from which Korea imported crude oil in 1964. And that the next year would mark the 60th anniversary of their bilateral energy cooperation.

Ambassador Byung-ha went on to explain the chronology of their relationship, by noting that the economy preceded diplomacy, as oil sailed first, followed by construction workers. But ever since then, he noted that their two countries had been developing comprehensive and multi-dimensional relations which had already become strategic on the ground.

Elaborating, he said, their trade volume reached around US\$13 billion in 2022, which meant Kuwait was the 6th largest exporter to Korea. Moreover, over 100 million barrels of oil flow to Korea every year, making Kuwait the 3rd largest oil supplier to Korea.

He also spoke about mutual support between the two countries in regional and global issues, and on increasing people to people contact, demonstrated by a rise in the number of Kuwaitis visiting Korea, and an increasing popularity of Korean dramas and films among people in Kuwait.

He further added that despite all the numbers, size, and volumes, he believed the overarching visions and underlying values they shared were of much more importance.

Ambassador Byung-ha revealed that Korea had been sharing their experiences of national development with Kuwaiti friends. He said that

Korea has already been deeply involved in translating the Vision 2035 into reality through the construction of many symbolic and strategic infrastructures.

He disclosed that Korea hoped to become an essential partner of Kuwait beyond 2035, pointing out that to do this they must further deepen their mutual understanding, particularly among young people.

He noted that a Korean language center at the King Sejong Institute, would open at Kuwait University next week and that Kuwait had restarted the Arabic language training program for young Korean college students this year.

He hoped that these young students would become strong bridges to connect the future that must be sustainable. This, he said, was also why Korea was hosting the World Expo 2030 in Busan that aims to seek collective wisdom on solutions to the global sustainability crisis.

In his remarks to the media, Ambassador Hayat, stressed the significance of the deeply rooted and strategic ties between Kuwait and South Korea. He noted that further high-level meetings and visits are expected to strengthen their partnership.

In his remarks on the occasion, Kuwait's Director of Joint Education at the Ministry of Defense, Brig Gen Faisal Dashti, highlighted the strong relationship between Kuwaiti Forces and the Korean Army, including joint exercises. He underscored the importance of military cooperation in the field of education as a cornerstone of their collaboration.

The reception provided guests with an opportunity to experience traditional Korean cuisine and culture, as well as interact with Koreans residing in Kuwait.

Kalyan Jewellers celebrates festive season with exciting Mega Diwali offers



Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands, recently kicked off the festive celebrations with the launch of its Mega Diwali offers campaign. As part of this, the jewellery brand has announced mega giveaways and bumper discounts for patrons. The unique promotion aims to ensure that patrons maximize the value of jewellery purchases from Kalyan Jewellers, by getting free gold coins weighing up to 2 grams* on their purchases above KWD 550*.

As part of these exciting offers, the brand has announced assured gold coin giveaways for patrons on jewellery purchases worth KWD 350 and above. Kalyan Jewellers will be rewarding patrons with a 2 gram gold coin on every KWD 550 spent on diamond jewellery, whereas a 1 gram gold coin on purchase of uncut/precious/platinum jewellery worth every KWD 550 OR purchase of diamond jewellery valued above KWD 350. Furthermore, the company has announced ½ gram gold coin giveaways to patrons making gold jewellery purchases worth every KWD 550 OR uncut/precious/platinum jewellery valued above KWD 350. The jewellery brand is also offering patrons with an assured gold coin on purchase of gold jewellery worth KWD 350 and above. This exciting array of giveaway offers can be availed until 24th December 2023 across all their Kuwait outlets.

Speaking about the offer, Mr. Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director – Kalyan Jewellers said, "At Kalyan Jewellers, our commitment is to empower our customers by ensuring they derive maximum value from

their purchases while enjoying an exceptional shopping journey. In line with this, we are thrilled to introduce our Mega Diwali offers campaign, designed to help our patrons make the most of their jewellery purchases. We are confident that our customers will continue to show their unwavering love and support for Kalyan Jewellers, making this initiative a big success."

Kalyan Jewellers is committed to providing exceptional experiences and fostering a sense of delight for its valued patrons. Customers can avail the exciting range of offers along with benefits of Kalyan's 4-Level Assurance Certification on their jewellery purchases, ensuring a seamless service-backed shopping experience. The Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate, guarantees Purity, Free Lifetime Maintenance of ornaments, Detailed Product Information and Transparent Exchange and Buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand's commitment towards offering the very best to its loyalists.

Kalyan Jewellers offers popular house brands such as, Muhurat – Wedding Jewellery Line, Mudhra - handcrafted antique jewellery, Nimah – temple Jewellery, Glo – dancing diamonds, Ziah – Solitaire like diamond jewellery, Anokhi – uncut diamonds, Hera – daily wear diamonds, Rang – precious stones jewellery, and the recently launched Lila – coloured stones and diamond jewellery.

For more information on the brand, its collections and offers, visit <https://www.kalyanjewellers.net/>



Al-Muzaini Exchange Company opens its newest branch in Kuwait

The number one money exchange company in Kuwait, Al-Muzaini Exchange Company recently opened its newest branch in Salmiya, Block 10, Street 3 on Wednesday, November 1, 2023. This opening was extremely significant and the rapid expansion reflects the company's endeavor to always be near its customers. It also reinforces the company's commitment to providing the highest quality of financial services such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange and bill payments with convenience, comfort and safety and at the most competitive prices, seven days a week.

The General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Mr. Hugh Fernandes and the company's department managers and various senior personnel inaugurated the new branch in Salmiya and Mr. Fernandes stated: "We take great pride in strengthening our leading position in the local market and always place focus in ensuring that we provide the best financial services experience to our customers in order to meet all their money transfer needs. We always want to stay true to our mission; to always be near to our customers and to add to their convenience and the opening of our new branch is another step in that direction."

The company always strives to make its financial services accessible to all. In addition



to its strong network of branches, Al Muzaini application provides simple and safe financial solutions and is packed with plenty of valuable features such as: - Availability in all digital platforms, new customer registration, the ability to add a new beneficiary and benefits from the Western Union service and Visa Direct services that makes it possible for you to transfer anywhere, anytime.

Kuwait-Saudi rail link project feasibility study underway

Minister of Public Works Amani Boqmaz, prior to her resignation last week, announced that a feasibility study for the rapid railway link project between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is underway.

The study will assess the economic, technical, and financial viability of the project, as well as the best feasible path for the project that benefits both countries, said the minister in answer to multiple queries submitted by lawmakers. The estimated KD3 million cost for the study is to be borne equally by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The Kuwait-Saudi rapid railway link project is considered a significant development that is projected to boost economic cooperation between both countries.

The expected benefits of the project include the enhancement of trade, tourism, and logistics capabilities while also improving transportation links between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

On a related transportation file, the Minister confirmed that in March 2023, the public works ministry had held a meeting with heads of several diplomatic missions and ambassadors accredited to Kuwait to apprise them, and provide their embassies with data related to



the road network in Kuwait. This was done so that the embassies could nominate qualified companies in their respective countries to participate in developing Kuwait's road network.

In response to another question by an MP, the Minister stated that 36 companies were nominated by their countries' embassies through diplomatic channels. She added that although the ministry has not contracted with any company to maintain roads through direct contracts, 10 practices have been proposed, and the tendering procedures for these practices have been completed.



KEMS Zajil Telecom, Kalaam Group's Subsidiary in Kuwait, Partners with Huawei Kuwait for Next-Generation Network Transformation

KEMS Zajil Telecom, a Kalaam Group company, and a leading digital solutions provider in Kuwait, is pleased to announce the signing of a significant partnership Memorandum of Understanding with Huawei Technologies Kuwait Co. WLL, a leading Global provider of Information and communications technology (ICT) including state-of-the-art DWDM Infrastructure.

This strategic partnership aims to bolster KEMS Zajil Telecom's network infrastructure, and signifies a major step towards delivering high-quality, cutting-edge technologies that would empower the company to serve its customers better and fulfill increasing demands for unlimited data and seamless experience.



Together with Huawei, KEMS Zajil Telecom will deliver across the country a fully protected DWDM service with capacities up to 400Gbps. The selected platform can also scale to fulfill its demands for automation and on-demand services. The collaboration reflects a commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements in the telecommunications landscape.

By leveraging Huawei's technical expertise, KEMS Zajil Telecom aims to fortify its position in the market through technological innovation and a transformative network overhaul. This partnership aligns with KEMS Zajil Telecom's vision to continually enhance user experiences

and solidify its leadership in the Kuwaiti B2B market.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Veer Passi, Kalaam Telecom Group CEO, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "It marks a significant milestone for Kems Zajil as we unveil our strategic collaboration with Huawei, selecting their state-of-the-art Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) technology to upgrade our national Optical Transportation network (OTN). With Huawei's expertise, cutting-edge technologies and forward-thinking solutions, we aim to not only meet but exceed the expectations of our valued clients by driving digital transformation and reinforcing our commitment to excellence in the telecommunications sector.

This upgrade will empower customers to handle exponentially increasing data demands, faster download and upload speeds, reduced latency, AI based predictive fault management and superior network performance, enabling a whole new level of productivity."

Mr. Yasin Zong, Enterprise Partner Development Director of Huawei Gulf North office, also shared insights into the collaboration, stating,

"[It is a great pleasure and opportunity for Huawei to collaborate with KEMS Zajil and upgrade the Zajil's National OTN system to the next level with Huawei latest DWDM technologies, we firmly believe in that this strategic cooperation will help accelerate Kuwait's digitalization to a new era of faster, intelligent and fully connected nation. Moreover, we are also excited to further explore more possibilities of expanding our cooperation in connectivity industry with KEMS in other countries of GCC region.]"

As KEMS Zajil Telecom and Huawei Kuwait embark on this collaborative journey, the telecommunications industry can anticipate a new era of connectivity, technological advancement, and unparalleled user experiences.

KFAED marks UN Day with commitment to development work

Kuwait Fund for Arab and Economic Development (KFAED) participated in the 'United Nations Day' event, which was organized by the United Nations office in Kuwait on 30 October, under the patronage and presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Fund's Board of Directors, Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah.

The celebration comes on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the close partnership between Kuwait and United Nations bodies to enhance sustainable cooperation in achieving development goals, and in efforts to promote peace at the regional and international levels.



The Fund's acting director, Walid Al-Bahr, announced that the Kuwaiti Fund's total contributions to supporting development and humanitarian efforts and projects of United Nations organizations and bodies around the world amounted to about 34 grants, worth up to \$108 million.

Al-Bahr stressed that the Fund's efforts in partnership with United Nations bodies come within the framework of supporting regional and international humanitarian work in enhancing countries' capacity for development. He added that this cooperation has resulted in a profound impact on the sectors of education, health, agriculture, irrigation, transport, communications, energy, industry, water and sanitation in developing countries, in addition to supporting refugees and giving them the opportunity to have a decent life.



Indian Ambassador visits KISR holds talks with DG

Indian Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika recently paid a visit to the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and met with the Institute's Director-General Dr. Mane Al-Sudairwai, to discuss ways to enhance scientific collaboration between both countries.

Discussions highlighted the presence of a large number of Indian scientists at KISR, and the various potential opportunities for further cooperation between KISR and scientific institutions in India. Both sides expressed their interest in further strengthening their ties in the field of science and technology, which will help advance their mutual interest. The Indian embassy stated that it aims to facilitate increased exchanges between the two countries in the fields of research, development, and innovation.



Thought
for the
week

“ The biggest challenge or biggest crisis knocking on the doors of humankind is fear and intolerance.

– Kailash Satyarthi



Ninth Dubai Design Week to open with expansive program

- *Downtown Design, the Middle East's leading design fair and Dubai Design Week's anchor event, will celebrate its 10th anniversary with largest edition to date.*

- *The region's largest design festival will take place at Dubai Design District (d3) between 7-12 November, with more than 500 participants taking part from over 40 countries.*

The Middle East's largest design festival, Downtown Design, will take place at Dubai Design District (d3) from 7-12 November, featuring contributions by more than 500 participants from over 40 countries.

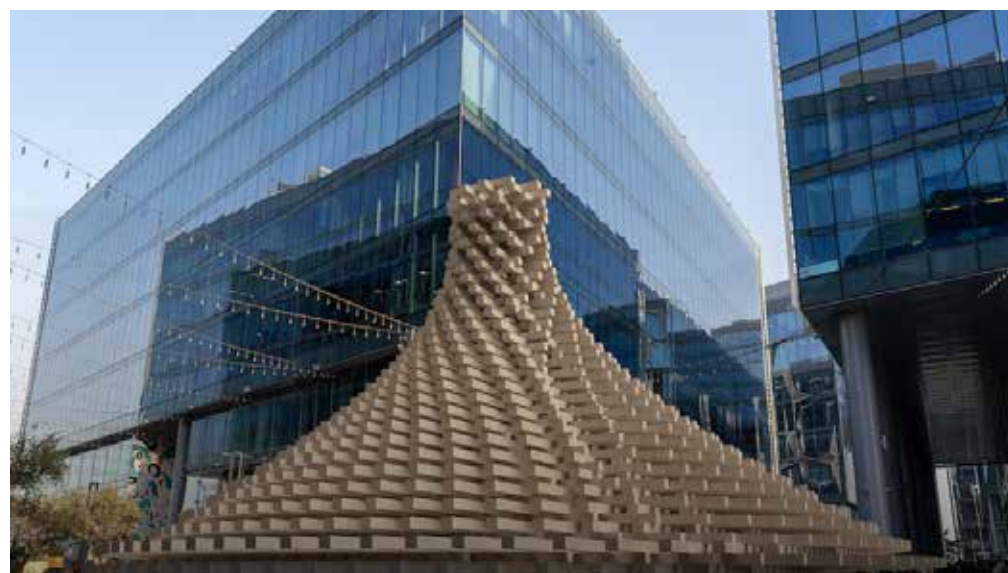
Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikhha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (Dubai Culture), the ninth edition of the festival will host its most diverse program of events and activities, including exhibitions, new commissions, pop-ups, talks, workshops, as well as other innovative design projects and experiences.

A key feature of this year's program will be large-scale outdoor installations with a focus on how design, science and technology can converge to reclaim materials of our past, as well as reimagine new forms that foster sustainable practices with immersive public interventions made from materials such as palm leaves, loofah, sugar and paper pulp, with 3-D printed architecture at the forefront.

The event aims to attract more than 150,000 visitors to d3's global creative hub, including architects, designers, thought leaders, influencers and public audiences from the region and around the world, further cementing Dubai's position as the design and creative capital of the Middle East and a UNESCO City of Design.

"Creative industries are not solely engines of economic growth – they shape societies and identities. By focusing on this intersection, Dubai has forged a formidable platform fueling creative innovation, collaboration and opportunities," said Senior Vice President of d3, Khadija Al Bastaki. She added, "This year, as always, talent will embrace our call to Rethink the Regular and springboard brilliant ideas, creations and perspectives that show us where the creative compass points."

For her part, Programming Director for Dubai Design Week, Natasha Carella, commented, "Our program has been developed in partnership with d3 for both the design community and the general public alike. We



aim to foster a dialogue around sustainability through engaging and thought provoking initiatives and focus attention on how different practices can converge to look at sustainability, which we see as pivotal for the future of the design industry."

In his remarks on the occasion, CEO of the Arts and Literature Sector at Dubai Culture, Dr. Saeed Mubarak bin Kharbush noted, "Design plays a pivotal role in expanding the horizons of design and innovation locally, regionally and globally and is a key pillar of our strategic

roadmap, and we are dedicated to providing ongoing support to nurture creativity and the inspiring individuals driving it forward."

Acclaimed as the Middle East's leading fair for contemporary and high-quality design, Downtown Design showcases the latest collections, innovative products, and design solutions, complemented by a line-up of creative concepts and installations, experiences, and industry events. It's the ultimate destination for those seeking the latest trends in interior design, furniture, lighting and home accessories.

A line-up of talks, workshops and masterclasses throughout the week will provide visitors of all ages a level of design know-how with a series of hands-on activities. This will be an opportunity to experience and learn from a range of practitioners – from professors of world-renowned institutions to expert facilitators and craftsmen.

For those looking to take a piece of Dubai Design Week home, The Marketplace (11-12 November), is a consciously curated outdoor shopping experience enabling visitors to discover the very best of the city's creatives, artisans and small businesses, from handcrafted unique goods and sustainably sourced products to a wide range of delicious food and children's activities. Located in the heart of Dubai Design District (d3), The Marketplace is a must-visit destination for all the family.

Dubai Design Week has evolved from its inception in 2015 into a major international design event. Its success can be attributed to its diverse programming, global reach, commitment to innovation and supporting local talent, and its role in shaping Dubai's identity as a thriving center for design and creativity in the Middle East. Over the years, Dubai Design Week has gained recognition on the global stage. It has become a platform for both emerging, pioneering and established designers to showcase their work, connect with industry professionals, and gain exposure in the Middle East and beyond.



Nurturing Hormonal Health



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

Hormonal health is a vital aspect of well-being for all people. In women, hormones play a crucial role in regulating various bodily functions that affect everything from mood and metabolism to reproductive health. Acting as the body's chemical messengers, hormones coordinate different functions in the body that are essential for health and life.

Naturopathic doctor, Dr. Astrid Boeckelmann, ND explains. "Hormones are chemical messengers produced by the body's endocrine glands, which travel through the bloodstream to different organs and tissues, regulating various bodily functions such as metabolism and reproduction. The hormones most thought of are male and female reproductive hormones, thyroid hormones, adrenal hormones and hormones like insulin that manage the glucose balance in the body, but there are many more."



Naturopathic doctor,
Dr. Astrid Boeckelmann

For women, there are several key hormones, each with its specific functions. The most well-known one is estrogen, the primary female sex hormone, which plays a crucial role in menstrual cycles, bone health, and in regulating mood. Progesterone, which helps prepare the body for pregnancy and is essential for a healthy menstrual cycle. Testosterone, which is often associated with men, is also found in women and contributes to energy, libido, and muscle strength. There are also thyroid hormones which influence metabolism and energy levels; and cortisol which is the stress hormone.



Hormonal imbalances occur when there is too much or too little hormone available overall, or at the wrong time. For example, changes in the monthly rhythm of female hormones can cause the menstrual cycle to be too short, too long, too early, or too late. Hormonal imbalances can be caused by a variety of factors, including medical conditions, lifestyle habits, and endocrine gland malfunctions, all of which affects the endogenous production of hormones. The endocrine system is also highly sensitive to exogenous hormones and hormone-like chemicals found in the environment.



"Many modern-day lifestyle choices change the normal hormone profile. For instance, unlimited access to carbohydrate-rich foods has caused a boom in insulin resistance and diabetes; high-stress jobs predispose us to adrenal insufficiency. Hormones, which are used in food production as pesticides, or in the meat and poultry industry, can enter the body through the diet," explains Dr. Boeckelmann.

In addition, environmental toxins can act as hormone mimickers or hormone blockers and thereby disrupt normal cell- and organ-function. Endocrine-disrupting toxins are found in everyday products, including cosmetics, food and beverage packaging, plastic toys, carpet, and pesticides. Some of the main factors affecting hormonal health for women in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states include:

Stress: Chronic stress can disrupt hormonal balance. Women in the GCC can benefit from practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation or breathing exercises.

Lack of Exercise: Regular physical activity supports hormonal health by maintaining a healthy weight and promoting the release of endorphins.

Sleep: Quality sleep is vital for hormonal regulation. Aim for 7-9 hours of restful sleep each night.

Environmental Toxins: Exposure to environmental toxins, including chemicals in personal care products, can disrupt hormonal balance. Choose natural, chemical-free products when possible.

Common hormonal issues include Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, a common hormonal disorder that affects many women in the GCC. It can lead to irregular periods, weight gain, and fertility issues and thyroid issues, such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, which can affect metabolism and energy levels. Menopause also affects women's hormones in general as well.

"It's not only about the lack of hormones, it is also about aging, and how the lack of hormones affect aging. To manage menopause, you have to supplement missing hormones but you also have to optimize the woman's health. Compared to the synthetic hormones available in the market, the safest exogenous hormones are the bioidentical hormones that have the exact chemical structure as the endogenous hormones that your body used to produce.

Treatment should also be individualized, as opposed to 'one-size-fits-all' synthetic hormone replacement therapy," said Aesthetic and Functional Gynaecologist & Menopause Expert at King's College Hospital London-Dubai, Dr. Maria Karakoulaki.



Functional Gynaecologist & Menopause Expert
at King's College Hospital London-Dubai,
Dr. Maria Karakoulaki.

Experts agree that maintaining hormonal health includes getting regular check-ups done with healthcare providers to monitor hormonal health and address any issues promptly. Ensuring you have a balanced diet that focuses

on a diet rich in essential nutrients, and engaging in regular physical activity, such as walking or swimming and, of course, stress reduction also helps in maintaining hormonal health.

"At the basis of any successful treatment is a comprehensive diagnosis, including an in-depth investigation of the root causes, triggers and contributing factors that cause the condition in the first place. At the initial stages of many endocrine conditions, balance can be accomplished by lifestyle and diet adjustments and/or nutrient supplementation. In advanced conditions, hormone replacement, medical hormone blockage and even removal of the endocrine gland have to be considered," concludes Dr. Boeckelmann.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of *Faces of the Middle East* and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity – *The House of Rest* which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, @hello_hermoine



'Women's Economics' Goes Mainstream

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

**Antara Haldar**

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

William Shakespeare's 1597 comedy *Love's Labour's Lost* tells the story of four Frenchmen as they navigate the tension between commitment to intellectual development and the quest for domestic bliss. Some four centuries later, Harvard economist Claudia Goldin reimagined the tale from the vantage point of American women balancing



Rather, women earn less than men due to the brute biological fact of childbirth. The pay gap starts to emerge a year or two after the birth of a woman's first child. By age 45, women earn 55 percent what men do, owing to childbirth-related factors like career interruptions and reductions in working hours.

Third, Goldin's research establishes that women's expectations of their prospects matter. Because of the 'demonstration effect' — that is, the example set by their mothers and grandmothers — they long sold themselves short professionally. This began to change in the US in the 1970s, with rising investment in female education and delays in marriage and childbirth.

In a working paper published on the morning of her Nobel win, Goldin highlights a series of developments between 1963 and 1973 that laid the groundwork for this shift. These include the passage of the Equal Pay Act, *Roe v. Wade* (when the US Supreme Court recognized a constitutional right to abortion), an increase in Ivy League admissions for women, and, especially, access to oral contraceptives.

Goldin's scholarship holds a number of important lessons for economics. It illustrates the centrality of history to understanding today's economic realities (a fitting tribute to Goldin's mentor and fellow Nobel laureate Robert Fogel).

There are persistent problems and inefficiencies that markets have failed to solve, even over the course of centuries. Why are women still paying such a high price for childbearing, a public good par excellence?

Goldin's scholarship also demonstrates the need to disaggregate economic agents, because outcomes often reflect self-fulfilling prophecies based on identity, social structures, and subjective perceptions. For example, as Goldin explains, most similarly-educated heterosexual couples do not split domestic duties evenly, because the male partner typically earns more. But this reinforces the pay differential.

Most radically, Goldin's work shows that economics inhabits not only formal institutional spaces, but also intimate ones. The discipline should be as concerned with marriage markets as it is with financial markets. The bedroom is no less relevant than the boardroom. Ideas that have long been addressed in women's magazines belong in economic journals.

Goldin's work underscores a point that feminists have long emphasized: women do not have the luxury of separating the personal from the professional. Economics cannot afford to ignore the reality that for women, domestic bliss comes with a price tag attached, in terms of both income and independence.

From a policy perspective, we have two options. We can reimagine marriage and child-rearing to ensure that women can compete in an economic system built for men, such as by introducing workplace childcare and making use of tax incentives.

Or, as Goldin advocates, we can reimagine the economy so that it works for women, making it more flexible, less 'greedy', and more focused on empathy. If we do nothing, however, love's labor will continue to be women's loss.

career and family. Now, Goldin's profound insights into women's labor-market outcomes have won her a Nobel Prize in Economics.

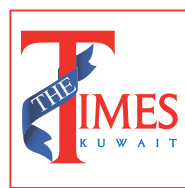
Goldin's achievement is notable not only because she works in an overwhelmingly male-dominated discipline — she is only the third woman in history to win the economics Nobel, and the first to win it solo — but also because her scholarship focuses squarely on gender. The issues Goldin researches — women's labor-force participation and, specifically, the gender pay gap — are typically siloed within feminist economics and marginalized in the field.

Goldin, who positions herself as an 'economist-detective', has cracked a number of cases, but as the Nobel Committee noted, three stand out. First, most theories of economic development assumed that, as economies grew, women would automatically and frictionlessly be pulled into the workforce. But Goldin's research shows that female labor-force participation over time follows a U-shaped curve.

Meticulously combing 200 years' worth of data, Goldin observed that as the locus of economic activity moves from agriculture to industry, female labor-force participation falls, owing largely to the challenge of balancing childcare with factory work, especially for married women. But once the service sector gains dominance, women join the workforce at much higher rates.

Second, the gender pay gap — women on average make 77 US cents for every dollar earned by men — has traditionally been attributed to myriad factors, from educational attainment to differences in ambition. Some claim that it is a matter of aptitude: former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, for example, argued in 2005 that men are biologically better suited to math and science.

But, by examining differences in pay within the same occupation, Goldin showed that the actual explanation is much simpler. As it turns out, the ongoing lag cannot be attributed to educational attainment; in rich countries, women have overtaken men on this front. And since the pay gap exists within professions, it cannot be attributed to women's higher representation in less lucrative fields. Nor can cognitive ability be the problem, given that pay for men and women is almost identical at university graduation.



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Curiosity, TV Serials, and the Brain

Curiosity may have killed the cat, as the English proverb states, but on another level it also increases people's patience to find an answer, while paradoxically, making them eager to find it. The findings by neuroscientists at Duke University in the United States, also complements another recent study, this time by researchers in the Netherlands, who have for the first time, identified the brain region responsible for curiosity.

The Duke research might help both teachers and students as it describes an angle to curiosity that instead of seeking immediate answers to a question or challenge, encourages students to stay engaged with the topic they are learning. We see this technique employed quite effectively in television serials, where each episode ends leaving viewers wondering what is going to happen next. But despite this urge to find what happens next, most viewers wait patiently for the next episode rather than seek the answer from 'spoilers' available online.

Curiosity has been critical in the evolution of the human race, as it is one of the most important factors that led people to go exploring new places, investigating the unknown, or to make breakthrough discoveries in various spheres of life. The new research paper, which appeared in mid-October in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the US, found that when people were more curious, they were actually more willing to wait.

In the paper, the researchers said they were 'curious' to know if higher curiosity would push people to seek, or to avoid, getting an immediate 'spoiler'. For their study the team



used a digital paintbrush and made a series of 30-second animated line drawing videos that eventually ended up as something highly recognizable, like a sandwich or a dog.

More than 2,000 adults then watched these short line-drawing videos online. Participants in the study were asked along the way how curious they were, how they felt, and to guess what the drawing would become. Viewers also had a 'spoiler' button to skip ahead to see the final drawing.

Researchers were surprised to find that when people were curious, they withheld from hitting the 'spoiler' button and kept watching the drawings unfold. It was when people were less curious that they tended to opt for an instant answer. Curiosity was found to not just motivate getting answers, it also increased the value of the discovery journey. IN addition, the study found that curiosity increased at different stages of watching the videos — higher curiosity during

moments where it seemed like the drawing could turn into something they could identify, and also when participants were starting to get really close to the answer.

Curiosity was also found to stir up people's feeling of joy, which could explain why the participants kept watching the line drawing video even when they could just hit a button to get the answer right away. This could also explain, for example, why knowing the end of a new TV series can remove the enjoyment of watching the plot unravel.

The researchers suggested that aside from watching TV shows, stoking curiosity might also help enhance motivation in the classroom to potentially improve learning. A recent study found that increasing curiosity can enhance memory by ‘readying’ the brain for new information, an attribute valuable for young learners. This latest finding highlights that curiosity can also bolster persistence throughout a learning journey, which is often needed for deep understanding. By understanding what sparks curiosity, especially how it arises from our own ideas, we can find more ways to cultivate it and benefit from the learning it promotes.

On an unrelated note, but still focused on curiosity, scientists have narrowed in on the brain mechanism behind curiosity. Curiosity is a highly valued attribute in human evolution as well as essential and intrinsic for survival of species. It is the motivational drive that urges exploration and investigation of the unknown, and find solutions to challenges or to make new discoveries

Until recently, the brain mechanisms underlying curiosity and novelty seeking behavior were unclear. However, researchers from the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience have now discovered a new brain circuit underlying curiosity and the desire to seek novel

experiences. Curiosity, hunger, and appetitive aggression — which is the positive feeling associated with the perpetration of violent behavior — drive three different goal-directed behaviors: novelty seeking, food eating and hunting, all of which are essential to survival of species. In animals these three behaviors are composed of similar reactions, which has made it challenging to study novelty seeking in animals and to distinguish it from eating and hunting.

Scientists have largely focused their research into motivational behavior by studying the brain mechanism of mice, as current technological limitations prevent studying similar brain mechanisms in humans. For their study, the researchers examined mice in an experimental battery of new and familiar objects and social interaction.

By increasing brain activity in a specific brain region, known as the Zona Incerta, interaction with novel objects and similar species increased compared to familiar objects and food. When the cells in this region were inactivated, depth and duration of investigation was found to decrease. Moreover, the researchers found that specific neurons were more active during deep investigation compared to during shallow investigation. Using several innovative techniques, a whole path of multiple brain regions was uncovered that converts curiosity into action in mice. The finding could help explain how curiosity sometimes wins over the urge for security, and why some individuals are more curious than others.

The researchers said they still know little about this area in humans, because it is located deep within the brain and it is difficult to measure activity with brain scans. They hoped that development of new techniques may lead to more clarity in the future about this area in the human brain.

Simple diet swap helps health, reduces carbon emissions

At first glance healthier eating habits and global climate change may appear to be quite unrelated, but a new study now finds that healthier eating and cutting carbon emissions that fuel climate change, could both be linked to the food we consume on a regular basis.



According to a new study by researchers at Tulane University in the US, making simple substitutions like switching from beef to chicken or drinking plant-based milk instead of cow's milk could reduce the average American's carbon footprint from food by 35 percent, while also boosting diet quality by between 4-10 percent.

Carbon footprint of food, also known as 'foodprint' is the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by growing, rearing, farming, processing, transporting, storing, cooking and disposing of the food we eat. Food accounts for over a quarter of all global GHG emissions, with this emission varying widely in the type of food that is produced.

According to a study on the environmental impact of our foods, producing a kilogram of beef (meat herd) emits nearly 100 kilograms of GHG gases (CO₂-equivalents), and poultry meat emits around 10 kilograms while a kilogram of peas emits just 1 kilogram of CO₂-equivalents. Overall, animal-based foods tend to have a higher footprint than

plant-based ones. Emissions are measured in carbon dioxide-equivalents. This means non-CO2 gases are weighted by the amount of warming they cause over a 100-year timescale.

The new findings highlight the potential of a 'small changes' approach that researchers believe could encourage more consumers to adopt climate-friendly eating habits. The study shows that cutting dietary carbon emissions is accessible and does not have to be a whole lifestyle change. Even something as simple as ordering a chicken burrito instead of a beef burrito when dining out, or picking a pack of frozen vegetables rather than frozen lamb, when out grocery shopping, can have a significant impact on emissions.

The study, which analyzed diet data from over 7,700 Americans, identified commonly eaten foods with the highest climate impact and simulated replacing them with nutritionally similar, lower-emission options. Substitutes included swapping a beef burger for a turkey burger. The study found that the largest projected reductions in emissions were seen in mixed dishes: burritos, pastas and similar popular dishes where it is easy to substitute a lower-impact protein instead of beef.

Although identifying healthy alternatives to high-carbon foods was not the intent of the study, nevertheless, the study found that swapping to lower carbon foods showed significant improvements in how healthy the diets were. While these substitutes are not intended as a cure-all for climate objectives or personal health goals, they are evidence that small changes can have a large impact.

The study clearly showed that there is overlap between sustainable diets and healthy diets, and that changing just one ingredient, or making one swap, can be a win-win, resulting in meaningful changes in both climate outcomes and how healthy our diets are.

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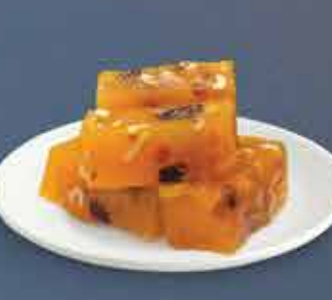
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