



DIPLOMAT

ICRC a humanitarian beacon

3

4



LOCAL

MoI to stop transfer of work visa from public to private sector

8

COP 28 UAE

Report on attitudes to climate change among news audiences



Global response to climate change widely off-track

By Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah
Managing Editor

Time is of the utmost urgency when it comes to addressing global climate change, but time is also what the world is fast running short of in tackling this challenge. As the planet hurtles towards a potential global catastrophe, we no longer have time to waste pursuing bumbling responses, or half-hearted measures to reduce the use of fossil-fuels and adopt cleaner renewable energy sources.

We need resolute and concerted efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change repercussions, as well as to curb and cut the use of fossil fuels. We need responses that are informed by scientific findings

and implemented in a structured, time-bound manner. And, we need these actions now, preferably through consensus of all concerned, if not, then enforced through trade sanctions, tax levies and other persuasive measures.

Economic considerations and vested interests that have for far too long hampered the implementation of meaningful responses to climate change, should not be allowed to continue diluting and dictating the course of climate actions. Existential threat of climate change overrides any economic or financial concerns; this is not rocket-science, it is pure common-sense.

It is not that the world does not have the knowledge, or the adequate tools to confront and triumph over



climate change. It is just that we have time and again allowed ourselves to be befuddled by specious, pseudo-scientific claims made by sponsored

scientists that aim to discredit and contradict scientific consensus. We have also been sidetracked by spurious arguments propounded

by climate change deniers and their handlers who seek to delay or thwart effective measures in addressing causes of climate change.

Two reports published in the first half of this month, underline the global community's continued failure to address climate change despite its existential threat to survival of the planet and people. The first, a 'Production Gap Report' published by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in early November, highlights our persistent inability to adequately curb fossil fuel emissions.

The second report, an assessment of national plans to combat global warming, released by the UN Climate Change (UNCC), reveals how far off-course the world is,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Ambassador inaugurates Swiss-Kuwaiti business platform

Embassy of Switzerland organized a ceremony last week to mark the launch of the new Swiss-Kuwait Business Platform, a non-profit volunteer group that aims to bring together corporate representatives, entrepreneurs, and professionals interested in, or already involved in business between Switzerland and Kuwait.

The business platform was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Switzerland, H.E. Tiziano Balmelli, with a ceremonial cutting of the cake in the presence of several local business and social dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Balmelli highlighted the robust bilateral relations between Switzerland and Kuwait, and the commitment to mutual support. He also underlined the enduring relations between the two countries, celebrating 57 years of diplomatic ties and

anticipating the upcoming 100th anniversary of relations between the peoples of Switzerland and Kuwait.

Pointing out that the volume of Swiss exports to Kuwait reached approximately \$764 million in 2022, the envoy expressed optimism about the platform's role in further facilitating joint business opportunities, promoting experience and idea exchange, and fostering communication among businessmen in both nations.

Ambassador Balmelli also emphasized the unique opportunity the platform offers to Swiss companies interested in the Kuwaiti market, and the potential for collaboration in areas such as food security, where Swiss technologies could contribute to Kuwait's agricultural sector.

In particular, the ambassador pointed to the Green Line company in Kuwait,

specializing in hydroponics and utilizing Swiss technologies to produce healthy foods locally. Ambassador Balmelli also emphasized the need for cooperation in shaping health policies, leveraging Swiss expertise beyond medicines and medical equipment.

For his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Managing Director of Ali Abdul Wahab Company, Faisal Al-Mutawa, praised the deep and solid relations between Kuwait and Switzerland, particularly in humanitarian efforts. He recalled Switzerland's support during the Iraqi invasion and highlighted the cooperation between the Kuwaiti Red Crescent and the International Organization of the Swiss Red Cross.

The Swiss Ambassador also announced that a charity bazaar would be held for the benefit of people in Gaza on 9 December at the Al-Shaheed Park, under the auspices



of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Diplomatic Club,, and the proceeds from the event will be donated to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for their humanitarian work.

UK introduces electronic visa for GCC nationals



United Kingdom announced last week the launch of the electronic travel authorization system to replace the

previously employed visa system for citizens hailing from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Implemented first for citizens of Qatar, the new travel authorization system will gradually encompass all the remaining GCC nations, including Kuwait. Moreover, citizens of Jordan will also be included in this new scheme, with the system set to come into force from 22 February.

According to the press statement issued by the British Home Office, individuals planning to visit the United Kingdom after 22 February must register through this newly introduced electronic system, with

registration becoming available from the first day of the preceding month.

The statement further elucidated that securing the electronic travel permit will be a smoother process, requiring a mere cost of ten

pounds (\$12.5). Furthermore, this permit will have the added benefit of being multi-travel, meaning it can be utilized for multiple visits to the UK, and will remain valid for a duration of two years.

Caesars Travel Group Wins 'MALT Excellence Awards 2023'

Caesars Travel Group, one of the leading travel companies has become one of the big winners at the prestigious MALT Excellence Awards 2023. The company is chosen as this year's recipient of the "Top Organizations in Travel in GCC". The MALT Travel Awards have been presented based on the criteria and judging procedure adopted in selecting organizations/individuals for their exemplary role played in the field of MICE, Business, and Luxury Travel. This award is one of the most prestigious awards in the industry. The MALT Travel Awards were presented in a ceremony in conjunction with the Meetings Arabia and Luxury Travel Congress at W Dubai, the Palm Hotel on Tuesday, the 21st of September 2023. The event was attended by a distinguished audience of decision-makers and leaders from the travel and tourism industry as well as the trade and consumer press.

"We are very honored to have been awarded at this year's MALT Travel Awards, which is considered the Oscars of the travel and tourism industry. Being honored with this award proves that our premium offer as well as our outstanding service is appreciated by our customers. It also proves our consistent commitment to providing a seamless travel experience service and other travel-related services for travel lovers. Besides, this award will surely inspire us to continue our sincere efforts for ensuring memorable travel experiences for our customers through our innovative and superior customer services", said P.N.J. Kumar, the Chief Executive Officer of Caesars Travel Group.

Cruise Center

The one and only office in Kuwait, the subsidiary of Caesars Travel Group, exclusively selling Cruise Holidays has reemerged with a new zeal for exploration and an increased awareness of the impact of travel among cruise lovers. While there are still challenges ahead, cruise lines continue to push forward in their post-pandemic recovery, offering an even better experience on board – and on land – than ever before. Cruise Center offers a variety of cruises on different popular ships and cruise lines as bucket-list travel and multi-generational travel start to become more popular than ever before. Recently, Cruise



Award ceremony of the MALT Excellence Awards 2023

Center was honored to be the 2nd positioned winner of the "Best Producer-2023" award for Middle East & Africa, and the award was presented on board the MSC Seaview.



Bijoy John receiving the award on board, MSC Seaview

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ICRC a humanitarian beacon

Protecting Lives, Providing Assistance

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stands as a beacon of hope and compassion in times of conflict and crisis around the world. Established in 1863, the ICRC has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the lives and dignity of those affected by armed conflicts, violence, and natural disasters. With its unwavering commitment to humanity, neutrality, independence, and impartiality, the ICRC continues to make a profound impact on the lives of millions of people.

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

Regional Head of Delegation of the ICRC for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries H.E. Mamadou Sow is a soft spoken man of compassion and prudence, and is an excellent representative for the 160-year-old organization helping people and saving lives. In a recent wide ranging exclusive interview with the Executive Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, he explained the work that ICRC does and its mission in the region.

"We have been in the country for 32 years and have an outstanding relationship with Kuwait that has grown over the years," said Mr. Sow by way of introduction. He added that ICRC has also grown substantially in the past couple of decades because of the growth in humanitarian needs around the world.

"In the last few decades we have seen the Middle East turn into an inferno with the wars in occupied Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, as well as in Africa, in the Lake Chad region, Mali, South Sudan, Burkina Faso and others," commented Mr. Sow. Expressing gratitude to Kuwait for its support, he pointed out that Kuwait has supported the growth of the ICRC in the last few decades, allowing the organization to respond to many humanitarian needs around the world.

Commenting on the role of ICRC in the region, he explained that Kuwait was the regional office of ICRC, and offices have been opened in Qatar, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia, as they saw the GCC as an incredible ecosystem where the leaders were quite interested in humanitarian work. "We partner with entities and institutions who are at the cutting edge of innovation so we are able to respond to the needs outside the GCC. It is also a partnership and policy dialogue not just a fund-raising initiative," he noted.

He further stressed that Kuwait was also at the forefront on the issue of the people missing from Kuwait as a result of the Iraqi occupation in 1990-91. It is a topic of great interest and is being pursued with intensity and consistency but silently, said Mr. Sow. "Kuwait has been a fantastic champion on the missing persons resolution, which has been a landmark resolution and a great example of policy engagement with Kuwait," he added.



Regional Head of Delegation of the ICRC for GCC Countries H.E. Mamadou Sow (left) with Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza.

"We meet regularly with Kuwaitis, Iraqis, Saudi, British and America on the subject of the missing persons. The file is not closed and as long as there are families who have not found their loved ones we will continue," he emphasized, noting that the families have a right to know. He hoped that in the coming years more progress could be made on this topic.

"In addition to that we work on what we call the normative frameworks which includes International humanitarian Law. We think it is important for states in times of peace to have understanding of that body and to teach it in the country, and to disseminate it among armed forces, because in times of peace its forces have to be informed and aware of this obligation.

Commenting on the global reach of the ICRC, Mr. Sow said that they were present in around 100 countries with over 30,000 staff. He pointed out that there were more than 100 conflicts around the world which not only includes conflicts between countries but also inside countries as well. Some of them are in the limelight due to the media and some not mentioned by the media.

"In ICRC we have engineers, lawyers, doctors and even weapon specialists, soldiers, army officers and finance specialists. We also have around 20 million volunteers making us the largest humanitarian network in the world. We have a saying in the Red Cross and Red Crescent

that we are everywhere. In times of peace or war we are there."

He noted that in any conflict the ICRC was the first to respond and last to leave. "When war erupts and organizations are extracting their people from the area, we mobilize our people to move in," he pointed out.

ICRC is well respected the world over for its impartiality, said the ICRC representative, noting that from his experience in the region the GCC states value input and professionalism, and our neutrality is an added value.

Emphasizing that the ICRC does not take any sides in a conflict, he said "we are involved in all countries we work in and wherever we are, we try to make a difference." He further clarified that the ICRC was a private organization and did not report to any government, as such they were independent in a way and cared much about maintaining their neutrality and impartiality, and that this was the real foundation of their work.

"We don't take political sides and whenever we encounter violations of international law we directly and bilaterally engage with anybody who can effect change on the ground, and as long as they control a territory and fight a war we believe they should be held accountable to uphold human dignity."

Explaining this point he said "We find them, track them and engage with them and keep the

conversation confidential. We put the interest of those affected at the forefront of our work,"

On the role of United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) he pointed at the fantastic job they were doing and explained that the UNHCR and ICRC were good examples of working around a conflict. "When people are uprooted from their homes and they flee the violence and cross the border, they are under the mandate and protection of the UNHCR. When they are trapped inside the country they are under the mandate of the ICRC," explained Mr. Sow.

Clarifying the role of the ICRC, he added that they supported victims of war not only in terms of essential service but also in the respect of life and dignity. "People have a right to be safe and have a dignified life, and to have peace is a right, regardless of where they are, and that is why we stand firmly with people who are affected regardless of where they are."

He noted that in the last two decades humanitarian needs around the world were growing even though a lot of effort had been put into resolving some of the conflicts. This has led to less fights in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere but the plight of the ordinary people have been affected by those wars, he noted.

The needs of ICRC are quite vast and climbing every year and this is a big problem, he pointed out, adding that when they get less support, more people suffer. He was quick to note that they were extremely grateful for the support they received from the GCC.

Having joined the ICRC in 2007 after shifting from a training position for politicians, Mr. Sow worked in different countries from visiting prisons in Rwanda to countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. "The satisfaction of making a difference whether as a frontline worker or behind a desk, is amazingly fulfilling," he points out while stressing that being part of a team machine that is involved in making a difference is a blessing, along with forming work partnerships and working with colleagues.

In the little over a year and half since taking over his assignment in Kuwait Mr. Sow feels extremely grateful, and considers it a blessing in many ways, to be posted in Kuwait. "I enjoy the culture and tradition and feel enriched by it," he said concluding the interview.

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Over 5,000 workers deported so far this year

Latest figures from the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) show that a total of 5,504 expatriates found in violation of residence and labor laws were deported from the country since the start of 2023. The data also showed that the majority of expatriates living illegally in the country were arrested in August, September, and October, at 1,175 and 996 and 836 respectively.

The four-member Joint Committee

led by officials at PAM and comprising members from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Kuwait Municipality spearheaded the drive to arrest the illegal residents, and to refer them to the competent authorities for legal measures to be completed prior to the deportation from the country.

According to PAM, 2,115 of those arrested were found to be private sector workers who held Article 18 work visas, and 1,429



were domestic workers who held Article 20 visas. In addition, 28 were on family visas of government sector workers (Article 17), and 1,910 were arrested with expired work permits and were living illegally in the country.

Some of those arrested reportedly confessed that they had paid large sums of money, ranging from KD1,500 to KD2,000, to business owners in exchange for providing them with a work visa.



Municipality to evict schools in model residential areas

The Municipal Council at its meeting last week unanimously approved an amendment to the evacuation process of private schools located in private and model housing areas. The amendment, proposed by Member Nasser Al-Jadaan, focuses on providing a more structured approach to the transfer and evacuation of these schools.

Under the new amendment, private schools are required to vacate the housing areas within a three-year period from the date the decision was issued and approved by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs. By specifying a time frame, the amendment ensures that schools will have sufficient time to build and equip alternative facilities, leaving no excuse for non-compliance.

The state has already allocated 14 sites in various investment areas, such as Jahra, Farwaniya, Fahaheel, and Mahbouda, for the relocation of private schools. Schools are encouraged to approach the Ministry of Finance to sign contracts and receive the allocated sites.

Additionally, if schools are worried about the distance for their students to the new sites, they have the option to purchase land or vouchers in investment or commercial areas without any monetary charge.

The amendment also addresses the non-compliance of some schools. If these schools do not adhere to the decision, the municipality and concerned authorities have the right to cut off their electricity supply and forcibly evacuate them, treating them like any other violator.

For his part, Council President Abdullah Al-Mahri stated that the Council, along with its members, is dedicated to completing all transactions accurately in accordance with established legal frameworks. He noted that the Council had also approved several laws to alleviate burdens on the public, following a citizen-centric policy. Al-Mahri emphasized that this approach will continue to shape the Council's agenda in the coming period.

MoI to stop transfer of work visa from public to private sector

In a bid to pressure the private sector to hire more nationals, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is reportedly halting the transfer of residency permits for expatriates from the government to the private sector.

Until now, expatriates working in the government sector who were terminated as part of the Kuwaitization plan, or had resigned their posts had the option to transfer their residency permit to the private sector, enabling them to continue working in Kuwait.

The said directive by the MoI appears to be part of the government's ongoing efforts to reshape the labor market and promote nationalization policies.

By preventing the transfer of residency permits to the private sector, the government seeks to bridge the gap between job opportunities available to expatriates and



those offered to Kuwaiti citizens.

According to the new directive, expatriates who have worked in the government sector under the provisions of 'Article 17' will no longer have the option to transfer to an Article 18 visa to work in the private sector.

DDI organizes event to mark World Diabetes Day



For the 16th consecutive year, Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), held their annual informative event to commemorate World Diabetes Day on 14 November. This year's event was held at Al Hamra Tower and Shopping Center. The event allowed visitors to consult with diabetes specialists and dietitians, as well as gather medical information from booths that explained various facts of diabetes and promoted healthy lifestyle modification.

In addition, DDI had two booths, one assigned for Clinical Research and the other for Scientific Research to showcase the various research and studies being carried out by the Institute and encourage eligible members of the public who meet certain criteria to get involved and join DDI's research and studies and benefit from it.

Many of the booths at the event offered various activities and services, such as educating visitors on proper dietary habits, pharmacotherapy counseling, and importance of physical activities amongst others. In addition, some of the booths provided blood glucose and blood pressure testing, as well as vital signs assessment.

"Holding such events and activities stems from DDI's mission statement, where health

promotion and awareness are a priority for the Institute. Since its establishment in 2006, the Institute organizes and takes part in many events and campaigns to draw spotlight on diabetes and its related conditions. This is in accordance with the Institute's belief that, 'Prevention is better than cure,'" said the Director-General of DDI, Dr. Qais Al-Duwairi.

The primary goal of the event was to promote awareness about diabetes, work towards achieving long-term positive health outcomes for diabetes management and empower those affected by diabetes to proactively improve their quality of life.



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Indonesia seeks to enhance exports to Kuwait

Embassy of Indonesia in collaboration with the country's Ministry of Trade organized last week the Indonesian Trade and Tourism Forum and Exhibition (ITTFE) at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The event served as a strategic platform for Indonesian businesses to expand their market, and to facilitate the boosting of exports to Kuwait.

In a statement on the occasion, the Deputy Minister of Trade for Indonesia, Jerry Sambuagaisaid that Kuwait is a promising export market for Indonesia, given that Kuwait relies on imports for approximately 95 percent of its domestic needs.

He highlighted the potential for enhancing bilateral relations between Indonesia and

Kuwait through various channels, such as the Indonesia Trade and Tourism Forum and Exhibition (ITTFE). "This forum is a good strategy because it can help us expand the market. It also makes it easier for Indonesian companies to achieve further progress and enhance their exports to Kuwait."

Indicating that Indonesian business could participate in upcoming development projects in Kuwait, the minister noted that Kuwait has plans to implement 107 mega projects in the period 2023-2024. Additionally, the Kuwaiti government is working on a new agricultural concept aligned with food flexibility as a priority program.

According to data from the Indonesian



Ministry of Trade, the total trade value between Indonesia and Kuwait in 2022 was around US\$316 million, with Indonesia recording a surplus of \$27 million. From

January to September 2023, bilateral trade reached nearly \$406 million, marking an increase of about 85 percent compared to the same period last year.

Indonesia's exports to Kuwait during this period amounted to \$188 million, reflecting a 52 percent increase. Indonesia primarily exports items such as 1,000 to 3,000 cc vehicles, valves, block plates, sheet plates, beams, and wood pulp to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's imports from Kuwait totaled around \$218 million, indicating a significant increase of over 127 percent compared to the same period a year before. Kuwait's major exports to Indonesia include sulfur, cyclic hydrocarbons, ethylene polymers, liquid pumps, and elevators.

Municipality to auction electronic billboards

Director of Kuwait Municipality, Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, announcing that the municipality intends to auction electronic billboards to competitive bids, clarified that the municipality welcomes the participation of foreign companies in the bidding process, provided they have a local agent in Kuwait.

Responding to a query from Municipal

Council member Dr. Hassan Kamal regarding the enforcement of advertising regulations, Al-Dabbous highlighted that there are a total of 30 licensed television screens across all governorates. Elaborating on the criteria for the auctions and responsibilities of those winning the bid, Al-Dabbous specified that these screens should be located on commercial and industrial buildings, on

the roofs of main buildings without annexes, and on the structures of central markets for cooperative societies. Addressing the issue of electoral advertisements, he stated that such content is considered within the scope of permitted content in advertising auction contracts. However, he emphasized the obligation on all winners to refrain from publishing anything inconsistent with public

morals in the advertising material.

Al-Dabbous also made clear that the provision of electricity for street advertising and television advertisements is facilitated through the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The calculation of electrical consumption is conducted in accordance with the established procedures and systems of the ministry.

GU-Q conference tackles water shortage, climate change



Outcomes from Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q)'s 'Sustaining the Oasis' conference held from 12-13 November served as a catalyst for shaping new dialogues, collaboration, and research partnerships around water security and climate change, both within the region and around the globe.

The conference, a collaboration between GU-Q and the Earth Commons Institute at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, aimed to connect policy with science and technology, as well as circular and nature-based solutions. Discussions shed light on the role of water as a force to achieve greater regional cooperation and stability, while driving climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In a keynote that resonated over the two days, Malcolm Gladwell, New York Times bestselling author and journalist, stressed the need for urgency and taking greater social risks. Speakers from more than 35 organizations, including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, echoed this outlook, exploring how to accelerate inclusive, sustainable solutions as climate stressors, freshwater scarcity, and regional conflicts compound water challenges.

Qatar's water strategy was the focus of a high-level panel with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and representatives from Qatar Foundation's environmental research centers. The country's efforts to honor its international commitments have seen challenges evolve into opportunities for the region.

The role of Gulf countries in defining a water-secure world was the focus of another panel. Speakers pointed to achievements driven by the region's high adaptability, investments in non-conventional water sources, and wastewater reuse.

Bridging regional water needs and global climate goals, a high-level panel discussed actionable strategies to position water in the climate agenda at COP28. "As the negotiations become more and more complex, we focus on solutions," said Henk Ovink, former Dutch special envoy for International Water Affairs. "Water, with its interlinkages with food security, energy security, and biodiversity, will play a key role in showing that, if we want to change course in the context of climate change, water is the best driver," he added.



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LuLu Hypermarket organizes Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign

As part of its social responsibility to the community, LuLu Hypermarket organized a Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign at their Al Rai outlet on 16 November. The campaign, which was held in association with the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), aimed to raise public awareness about breast cancer and support patients in need.

The compassionate initiative garnered significant attention and participation from the community. The top management of LuLu Hypermarket played an active role in supporting the campaign, and donated a significant amount to aid breast cancer patients, providing them

with the necessary support and resources in their battle against this formidable disease.

Distinguished cancer specialists facilitated an awareness seminar on breast cancer during the event, drawing a large crowd of women, including individuals who were directly affected by this condition. Over 10 specialized doctors participated in the campaign, ensuring that attendees received comprehensive information regarding breast cancer risks, early detection, and preventive measures.

In a further inspiring and heartfelt gesture, LuLu Hypermarket's entire female staff actively participated in the campaign. Staff members,

who had been affected by breast cancer, shared their personal experiences during the session.

As part of the campaign, LuLu Hypermarket also set up a pink colored 'Support Wall', where shoppers were encouraged to write messages of support, or share their own experiences of breast cancer, and stick the message on the wall in an expression of solidarity with breast cancer patients in the community.

LuLu Hypermarket's breast cancer awareness campaign created a platform for raising awareness and educating the public through accurate medical information from the IDF doctors, and provided support for individuals

impacted by breast cancer. By actively engaging customers and the community, the event not only provided valuable information but also brought a sense of empowerment to those affected by this disease.

LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to social responsibility continues to shine through initiatives such as the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. As a leading retail chain, they recognize the importance of giving back to society and making a positive impact on individuals and communities in need. Their efforts to support cancer patients through the IDF collaboration is certainly highly commendable.

Recipe For Productivity



By Fiona Lobo

Head – Training & Development
Mindtree International Kuwait

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of time management
- 2 tablespoons of goal setting
- 3/4 cup of focus
- 1/2 cup of energy
- 1 tablespoon of motivation
- A pinch of self-discipline
- A dash of breaks
- A handful of positivity
- 1 tablespoon of technology



Instructions:

Preheat your mind: Clear your mental clutter by taking a few deep breaths and meditating for a few minutes. Prepare your mind for a productive session.

Time Management: Start with a cup of time management. Prioritize tasks and allocate specific time slots to each task. Use tools like calendars or to-do lists to keep track of your work.

Goal Setting: Add two tablespoons of goal setting. Define clear, achievable goals for the day or a specific task. This will provide a sense

of purpose.

Focus: Stir in 3/4 cup of focus. Avoid distractions by switching off unimportant notifications and finding a quiet workspace. Breathe and begin!

Energy: Mix in 1/2 cup of energy. Ensure you are well-rested, have a healthy meal, and stay hydrated. Physical well-being is essential for productivity.

Motivation: Add 1 tablespoon of motivation. Remind yourself why you want to be productive. Visualize the benefits and rewards that you will receive on completing your tasks.

Self-discipline: Sprinkle in a pinch of self-discipline. Remember, staying dedicated to your plan is crucial, even when you are tempted to procrastinate. Ensure you do not get distracted and stay focused on your goals. Remember to take 5-minute mindful breaks to refuel and stay focused.

Positivity: Sprinkle a handful of positivity. Maintain a positive mindset even in the face of challenges. Your attitude can impact your productivity.

Technology: Add 1 tablespoon of technology. Use productivity apps, tools, or software that would help streamline tasks and boost efficiency.

Mix thoroughly: Combine all the ingredients by staying focused on your tasks, managing your time well, and keeping your goals in sight.

Bake: Let your productive mindset bake. Continue working on your tasks, sticking to your schedule, and tackling your goals.

Serve: Enjoy the fruits of your labor. Savour the satisfaction of a productive day and the accomplishments you've achieved.

NOTE:

This recipe for productivity, only when followed consistently, will help you stay focussed, manage yourself and your tasks better, and help accomplish your goals efficiently.

AlSayer announces GR Yaris racing cup in Kuwait



Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est Company announced last week the launch of Gazoo Racing (GR) Yaris Cup supported by Toyota Motor Corporation in association with Kuwait Motor Town and Suffix Sports.

The event was attended by the AlSayer Group Chairman Faisal Bader Al Sayer, the company's COO, Bengt Schultz COO, Senior Business Director Toyota Group Sales, Martin Aherne and top officials of the company along with representatives from the sponsoring brands, and members of the media.

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) certified event will be the first grass root level one-make race initiated by an automotive distributor in the region and will feature 10 Kuwaiti racing drivers backed by a strong track record of achievements in the field of motorsports.

According to Mr. Aherne, "We are excited to introduce a thrilling new season for all the racing enthusiasts with the GR Yaris Cup. Toyota and AlSayer are reaching out to support aspiring Kuwaiti racers who are looking forward to accelerating their racing career. Our vision is to make this a regional championship in the future with the support of other Toyota distributors. Further we are also planning to branch out this championship to other GR models in the coming years."

Ahmad AlMajed Chief Operating Officer Suffix Sports said "Suffix is proud to be involved in the event with AlSayer, a collaboration that seeks to redefine the realm of motorsports awareness, extending it beyond conventional sports boundaries."

The inaugural race of the GR is scheduled to be held during 16-18 November at Kuwait

Motor Town followed by races during the months of December, January, February, and the final race scheduled in March. Additionally, each event will also feature a GR village which will showcase the latest GR models in addition to unique Toyota models such as the Mirai, GR Corolla, BZ4X, Rav4 PHEV.

Motorsports enthusiasts will get a chance to interact with the Chief Engineer of the GR Yaris and the Chief Manager from TGR All Japan Rally Team for the round 2 race which will be held in



December along with a unique drift session by a leading GR World Rally Championship driver.

GR Yaris is a true sports car developed by experts at the Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) World Rally Team and the 10 units which are part of the GR Yaris Cup are being race prepared under FIA regulations, in-house with skill and precision by service technicians at Al Sayer Ahmadi Performance. Carefully selected race specific components are added to the impressive standard specification to create a car at home circuit in the cut-throat environment of a one-make competition.

Poland, Kuwait mark 60 years of diplomatic relations



The Embassy of Poland celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Poland and Kuwait, which coincided with the country's National Day. Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadeq Maarafi was the chief guest at the event, which witnessed the participation of members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti dignitaries and special guests.

In her speech on the occasion, Charge d'Affaires at the Polish Embassy, Anna Marta Godoj Ciszowska, emphasized the enduring strength and depth of the bilateral ties between the two nations, as well as the historical and multi-faceted nature of the relationship between Kuwait and Poland.

She expressed satisfaction with the

recent agreements signed between the two countries, foreseeing an enhancement of their already strong ties. The diplomat stated her particular pride in facilitating a training program for Kuwaiti Coast Guard students in Poland. She also noted the joint archaeological mission in Sabiyya and Failaka, which has been going on successfully for nearly two decades.

The Polish diplomat also pointed out that last year, with the support of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, an exhibition in Kuwait highlighted the shared history between Poland and Kuwait. The exhibition showcased the visit and work of Polish nobleman Walenty Jeleński Rzewuski to the Arabian Peninsula in the



19th century, including his detailed memoirs and comprehensive studies on Arabian horses, which helped create a unique bridge

between Polish and Arabic cultures.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Ukraine, she added that Poland remains committed to global peace initiatives, especially in Palestine. She added that Poland has allocated one million Polish zlotys to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

Additionally, she praised the support and assistance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the recent visit of the Polish Amber Association to Kuwait. The reception and positive response from the Kuwaiti people during the Amber Exhibition were seen as encouraging, reinforcing the belief that cultural exchanges serve as a wonderful link between the two countries.

Digitalization of Schengen visa to facilitate travel to EU

In a significant move toward digitalization and streamlining the visa application process, the Council of Ministers of the European Union (EU) adopted new rules allowing individuals applying for a visa to visit Schengen countries to do so online. This decision eliminates the need for physical stickers on passports and the traditional requirement for appointments at consulates or foreign offices to process the visa applications.

The decision, which follows an extensive legislative process, will be implemented

once technical work on the visa platform is completed, a process expected to take several months. The official publication in the Administrative Journal of the European Union is also anticipated shortly.

Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gomez, whose country currently presides over the EU session, emphasized the significance of this development, stating, "The possibility of applying for a Schengen visa online will be a major improvement both for citizens and for the process of processing



applications." He further noted that the online application process would enhance

efficiency, making it easier for travelers while reducing the burden on national administrations.

Once the new system is operational, applicants for short-term travel will be able to submit documents, data, and electronic copies of travel-related documents, including biometric information and payment of fees, all through an electronic platform. If the application is approved after database verification, the applicant will receive an encrypted code that can be printed or stored digitally.



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Report on attitudes to climate change among news audiences

Dr. Waqas Ejaz
Mitali Mukherjee
Dr. Richard Fletcher

The year 2023, may go down not only as the hottest ever recorded but also as a year that has, with an alarming increase in the frequency and severity of a wide range of climate change-induced extreme weather events, given us a stark foretaste of the climate change impacts we can anticipate over the coming decades and centuries. These impacts are far-reaching, extending to human health, politics, food supplies, infrastructure, financial markets, and society at large, and transcending national boundaries.

Considering the scale of climate change challenge and the widespread impacts that affect us all, coupled with the awareness that our window for effective action is rapidly closing, the responsibility to help tackle it extends well beyond governments alone; it falls on all key stakeholders, including the news media.

A substantial body of empirical evidence has identified that news media are crucial in shaping policy agendas, fostering public discourse, and motivating individuals to take pro-environmental actions. We know that the majority of people come across information on climate change from news media, which are thus influencing public understanding of and engagement with the issue. Understanding people's climate news consumption patterns and their impact on related attitudes remains critical for scholars, journalists, and policymakers, especially in countries from the Global South that are generally under-researched.

In this report, our aim is to offer fresh insights on the changes and consistencies in climate change news consumption patterns in a diverse sample of eight countries: France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and Brazil, India, and Pakistan, all of which contend with the profound impacts of climate change. In addition to news consumption, we assess public opinion on various related aspects, including the health impacts of climate change, public support for and coverage of direct action protests, and climate justice.

Survey of the eight countries belonging to the Global North and the Global South enables us to provide a valuable comparison between two groups: countries like France, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the USA in the Global North, and Brazil, India, and Pakistan in the Global



South. In the former group, patterns of news consumption are well documented, whereas in the latter, empirical research on the subject is still in its early stages and remains under-researched, even though these regions are home to substantial populations and face heightened climate-related risks.

Analyzing data from Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, the UK, and the USA, the survey found that:

- In most of the eight countries there has been a slight increase in climate change news use, with just over half (55%) on average using climate change news in the previous week.
- Climate news avoidance and trust in climate information from the news media have remained roughly stable, but avoidance has decreased slightly in the UK, USA, and Pakistan, as well as trust in the UK and Germany.
- Scientists remain the most trusted sources of news and information about

climate change, trusted by 73 percent on average, and respondents more often see them used as sources in the news media than any other source of information.

- Over three quarters (80%) of survey respondents say they are concerned about climate change misinformation, consistent with data from 2022.
- Once again, respondents think television and online (including social media and messaging apps) are where they see most climate-related misinformation.
- Politicians, political parties, and governments are frequently mentioned as sources of false and misleading information.
- Nearly two thirds of respondents believe that news media play a significant role in influencing climate change decisions, actions by large businesses, government policies, and public attitudes, with particularly strong beliefs in Brazil, India, and Pakistan.
- There is large variation in how soon respondents think people in their country

will face the serious effects of climate change, with significant proportions in every country thinking the consequences are decades away at least. However, people who use climate change news on a weekly basis are considerably more likely to think that people are being affected by climate change now.

- Significant disparities exist in perceptions of the impact of climate change on public health specifically, with those in Global South countries (Brazil, India, Pakistan) generally perceiving larger effects (50% or more) than those in the Global North (UK, USA, France, Germany, Japan).
- Just over half of respondents think that climate change has a larger effect on poorer people (53%) and poorer countries (52%), but there is a considerable partisan disagreement on this in France, the UK, and the USA, with those leaning politically right less likely to agree.
- People are more likely to think that richer countries and more polluting countries should take greater responsibility for reducing climate change, and weekly climate change news users are more likely to hold this view.
- In the UK, USA, Germany and France opinion is roughly evenly split on whether direct action climate protests (e.g. blocking roads, disrupting sporting events) are covered fairly by the news media. But in Germany, the UK, and the USA opinion varies depending on whether people support or oppose the protests.
- People in our survey expressed a high level of interest in various types of climate coverage, including news that discusses latest developments, positive news, and coverage presenting solutions. People did not express a clear preference for the type of solutions journalism they are most interested in.

The report authors expressed hope that the report, while providing new insights on issues linking climate change to health, politics, and climate justice, contributes to the ongoing global conversation about climate change, furnishes journalists and policymakers with evidence-based insights, and inspires informed public engagement on this pressing issue.

Published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism with the support of the Laudes Foundation.





COP28
UAE

United Nations
Climate Change



Global response to climate change widely off-track

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in limiting temperature increases to that agreed upon at the seminal climate conference in Paris in 2015. Together, the two reports underscore our apparent ineptitude in addressing the risks that aggravate and accelerate climate change.

The 2023 Production Gap Report, under the evocative title of 'Phasing down or phasing up?', paints a bleak picture of our response to addressing the most significant component behind climate change, our ravenous appetite for fossil-fuels. The annual Production Gap report tracks the discrepancy between planned production of fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas — by countries, and the global production levels that could limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (°C) as specified in the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015.

The Report reveals that governments are on track to produce more than twice the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be needed to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, literally doubling down on their fossil fuel production. Global production levels of coal, oil, and gas estimated from plans and projections made by governments would be respectively 460 percent, 29 percent, and 82 percent higher than those under a 1.5°C-consistent pathway. The plans also contradict the stated climate mitigation policies and pledges made by many of these countries.

The report underscores the wide gap that exists between the world's fossil-fuel production plans and its professed goals of reducing global warming. It is also a startling indictment of our climate carelessness, as well as our unbridled consumption and wanton pursuit of fossil fuels in blatant disregard for the future of the planet and of generations to come.

In his message on the 'Production Gap Report', UN Secretary-General António Guterres, emphasized, "We cannot address climate catastrophe without tackling its root cause: fossil fuel dependence. Fossil fuel emissions are already causing climate chaos which is devastating lives and livelihoods, and we're on course for far worse."

He called on countries to phase out coal — by 2030 in OECD countries and 2040 elsewhere — and urged the G20 nations to take the lead in ending licensing and funding for new oil and gas developments. "Leaders must act now to save humanity from the worst impacts of climate chaos, and that means ending our fossil fuel addiction by shrinking supply, driving down demand, and accelerating the renewables revolution, as part of a just transition."

He added that the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference, COP28, must send a clear signal that the fossil fuel age is out of gas — that its end is inevitable. "We need credible

commitments to ramp up renewables, phase out fossil fuels, and boost energy efficiency, while ensuring a just, equitable transition. Fossil fuels are sending essential climate goals up in smoke. It's time for change," said the UN Chief.

The 2023 UN Climate Change Conference, which will convene from 30 November to 12 December in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), is the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



The UNFCCC is the parent treaty of the Paris Agreement, the legally binding international treaty on climate change. To avoid confusion, the UNFCCC secretariat is now known as United Nations Climate Change (UNCC).

The overarching goal of the Paris Agreement is to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°Celsius (C) above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels." However, in recent years, it has become increasingly clear that we need to limit global warming to 1.5°C by the end of this century. The latest report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that crossing the 1.5°C threshold risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts.

At the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals is the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which embody efforts by individual countries to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change. NDCs are submitted to the UNCC every five years from 2020 to 2030. In order to enhance the ambition over time, the

Paris Agreement calls for successive NDCs to be a progression compared to the previous NDC, and to reflect its highest possible ambition to address climate change.

Once the latest available NDCs are submitted, it is collated and analyzed by the UNCC, which then prepares an NDC Synthesis Report. The '2023 NDC Synthesis Report' by the UNCC published on 14 November shows that even with increased efforts by some countries, much more action is needed now to bend the

world's emissions trajectory further downward and avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

The report provides yet more evidence that the world remains widely off-track in limiting global warming to 1.5°C and avoiding the worst outcomes of climate catastrophe. As the report shows, under current national plans, global greenhouse gas emissions are set to increase by 8.8 percent by 2030, compared to 2010 levels. However, the latest scientific studies by the IPCC indicate that to limit global warming to 1.5°C, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest, and decline 43 percent by 2030.

In a statement at the launch of the report, Executive-Secretary of UNCC, Simon Stiell said that to avert the climate crisis, and to get back on track, governments must take bold strides forward at the upcoming COP28 in Dubai. "This means COP28 must be a clear turning point. Governments must not only agree on what stronger climate actions will be taken, but also start showing exactly how they will deliver them."

He added, "We can make COP28 a game-changer. And provide a springboard for a

climate action surge. We need to rebuild trust in the Paris process, and this means delivering on all commitments, particularly on finance, the great enabler of climate action. And ensuring that we are increasing resilience to climate impacts everywhere."

For his part, the COP28 President Designate, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, stated: "The synthesis report underscores the need for us to act with greater ambition and urgency to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement; there is simply no time left for delays. COP28 must be a historic turning point in this critical decade for Parties to raise their ambition and to unite, act and deliver outcomes that keep 1.5C within reach, while leaving no one behind."

Climate science notes that fossil fuels are the largest contributors to global climate change, accounting for over 75 percent of GHG emissions, and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

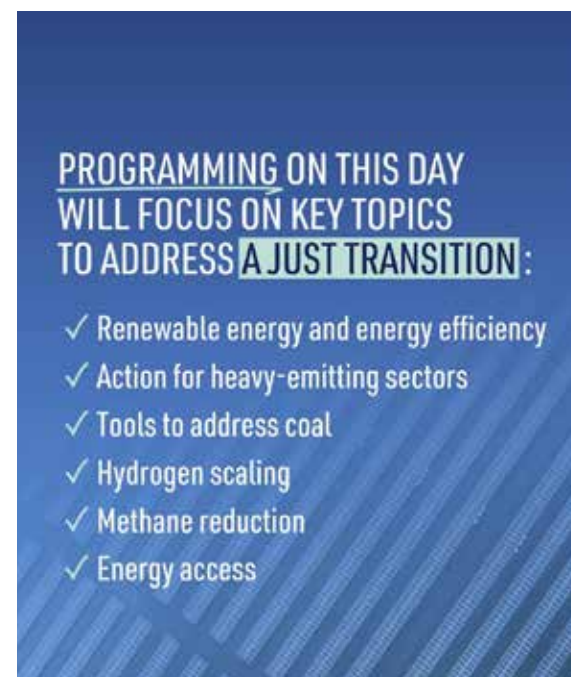
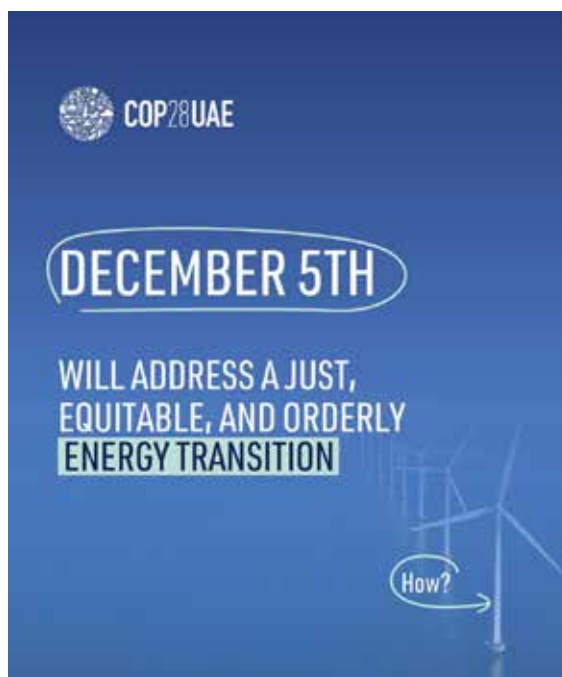
Increasing emission of GHG traps the sun's heat in the air above the Earth, precipitating global warming and climate change. Data shows that the world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history, and the ten warmest years in historical record have all occurred since 2010.

According to global temperature data from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Earth's temperature has risen by an average of 0.08°C per decade since 1880, or about 1°C in total. In 2022, the sixth-warmest year on record, the average surface temperature on Earth was 0.86°C warmer than the 20th-century average of 13.9°C, and 1.06°C warmer than the pre-industrial period (1880-1900).

The surface temperature increases witnessed in recent decades, especially the 1°C increase since the pre-industrial era might seem small, but it results in a significant increase in accumulated heat. It is mainly this extra heat that is driving regional and seasonal temperature extremes, reducing snow cover and sea ice, intensifying heavy rainfall, and changing habitat ranges for plants and animals — expanding some and shrinking others.

Most land areas have warmed faster than most ocean areas, and the Arctic is warming faster than most other regions. All of these weather and climatic perturbations are posing a risk to lives and livelihoods of human beings and to all other forms of life on Earth. If we are to avert the worst scenarios that await the planet and its people from unmitigated climate change, then the global community needs to wake up and act now.

Upcoming COP28 in Dubai provides us with an opportunity to act now; we cannot afford to miss this chance as we have so often done in the past. A recent rally placard said it best, 'There is no Planet B'.



Diplomats call for joint efforts to address climate change

With less than two weeks until the start of the 28th iteration of the Conference of Parties (COP) on Climate Change, the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute in Kuwait hosted a gathering of ambassadors and heads of mission to discuss the need for greater global efforts to combat climate change.

The seminar, organized at the Institute premises on 15 November, aimed to familiarize participants with COP28, the annual climate conference which is being held this year in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December.

During the seminar, diplomats emphasized the importance of joint action to tackle climate change, recognizing it as a shared global responsibility to protect the planet. They stressed the need for collective action, collaboration, and hard work to focus on clean energy, reduce emissions, increase resource efficiency, reduce demand, increase vegetation growth, and preserve water resources.

Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Diplomatic Institute, Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, emphasized the importance of holding such seminars and organizing similar events that



benefit ministry staff and participants, saying that shining a light on climate change is crucial, especially with COP 28 around the corner.

For his part, the UAE ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, said that hosting COP 28 aims to mobilize efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change and address the challenges facing the world due to this phenomenon. He added that the UAE will focus on water issues during the conference, one of the most vital pillars of life, emphasizing the need to improve the quality of life through

consumption, production, relieving pressure on water resources, and preserving them.

Speaking on the occasion, Australian Ambassador H.E. Melissa Kelly, stressed on the importance of tackling climate change because weather changes, droughts, wildfires, floods, and other environmental phenomena confirm climate change, affecting human and environmental life. She called for rapid measures to ensure the safety for future generations to live a decent life.

Nicaraguan Ambassador, H.E. Mohamed

Lashkar, acknowledged that his country, although economically challenged, plays a significant role in climate change. He described climate change as a "disease and pandemic" affecting all countries globally. He emphasized the severe consequences if countries do not cooperate to solve this problem.

In his address to the gathering Indian Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika highlighted the significant relationship between climate change and human activities. He emphasized that climate change is a major challenge requiring global commitments, sound policies, and legal frameworks to restore life to our planet. He pointed out that Climate Action, Climate Justice and Climate Finance are key elements in arresting climate change.

The UN-Habitat's Director for the Arab Gulf region, Ameera Hassan, stated that industries and factories in industrialized and developed countries account for 60 percent of emissions that affect the climate. She discussed the role of cities in combating climate change and urged compliance with laws and international agreements related to climate change, adding that it is imperative that all countries comply wholeheartedly with the agreed action plan.

SPOTLIGHT

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

What We Can Do About Food Insecurity



Kate Hampton and David Miliband

Kate Hampton is CEO of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. David Miliband, a former British foreign secretary and member of the World Health Organization Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, is CEO of the International Rescue Committee.



In London on November 20, the United Kingdom will host the Global Food Security Summit and launch a new strategy for international development. Despite pressing crises like the conflict in Gaza, we must stay focused on other parts of the global system, where ongoing crises of hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity demand an urgent response. Faced with immense suffering around the world, we need a UK government that is willing and able to offer solutions.

The organizations we lead — the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) — are resolutely committed to protecting vulnerable children and families wherever they are. In Gaza, the IRC has set out detailed proposals for a humanitarian ceasefire to save the lives of Palestinian civilians and increase urgent access to food, while CIFF is helping to lead the charge on issues like child wasting. We each have a clear stake in the success of the summit (which CIFF has helped organize) and the government's new strategy for international development.

The global hunger crisis has become critical. Around 345 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity this year — more than double

the number in 2020 — and 45 million children under five suffer from acute malnutrition. Up to two million of those children die every year, and climate change and violent conflict are making the problem even worse.

Over the last decade, CIFF has invested over half a billion dollars in treating and preventing child wasting, and understanding what works to improve nutrition. It is a proud anchor partner to the Child Nutrition Fund, the largest global response to the child wasting crisis, which will be a key focus of the summit.

For its part, the IRC helps people in more than 50 countries whose lives have been shattered by conflicts and crises such as climate change. It constantly tests and scales up innovations to treat problems like malnutrition and food insecurity, for example by providing farmers and families in countries like Niger, Pakistan, South Sudan, and Syria with climate-resilient seeds and secure livelihoods. Proven solutions exist.

But we must all go further. To succeed, the summit needs to deliver on four fronts. First, participants should commit to scaling up proven,

cost-saving solutions and innovations. A good example is ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), a fortified peanut paste that helps 92 percent of acutely malnourished children recover, but which most children in conflict-affected settings cannot currently access. More than a decade of research from the IRC shows that with simplified, combined protocols, more children can be reached with the same resources. A study in Mali, for example, found a 30 percent cost saving.

The World Health Organization will also use the summit to introduce new guidelines on the treatment and prevention of wasting, taking a positive step toward decentralizing and expanding treatment globally.

Second, the summit can combine disparate responses to the closely related climate- and food-security crises. A new IRC analysis shows that humanitarian need is particularly concentrated in just 16 conflict-affected, climate-vulnerable countries. Given the importance of climate finance, we must tie the summit's outcomes to the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and the UK government's own new development strategy. Ensuring that climate finance reaches the most vulnerable communities requires improving local-level climate-risk mapping and access to grants, as well as operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund established at COP27. Loss and damage support should come in addition to existing climate-finance commitments and be proportional to vulnerable communities' needs.

Addressing climate finance also means tackling the global debt crisis and responding to the need for a more sustainable debt regime. It

is well known that countries with shrinking fiscal space increasingly lack the capacity to invest in human capital and prevent food insecurity.

Third, the summit can set the stage for closing the global nutrition-financing gap in 2024. Donor governments must look ahead with ambition to next year's Nutrition for Growth Summit, by increasing their bilateral financial support for food security and starting to mobilize more effective and inclusive pooled funds.

“

Around 345 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity this year — more than double the number in 2020 — and 45 million children under five suffer from acute malnutrition. Up to two million of those children die every year.

”

Finally, the summit must mobilize political will, by uniting world leaders and partner governments around a global plan to address food insecurity once and for all. Lofty rhetoric by global leaders must translate into policy implementation that includes practical support for national nutrition and food-security plans. With a concerted, coordinated effort, we can turn the tide on global food insecurity, and the UK can demonstrate its capacity to lead. The Global Food Security Summit — and the accompanying development strategy — could be a significant catalyst. Ten years ago, Andrew Mitchell, currently the UK minister of state for development and Africa, and David Cameron, the former prime minister who has just returned to serve as foreign secretary, helped unlock hundreds of millions of dollars for nutrition aid at the UK-hosted Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2013. Now, the UK and its partners must deliver again.

Thought
for the
week

Don't let someone
else's opinion of you
become your reality

— Les Brown



By Nourah Khan
Travel Writer
The Times Kuwait

Nestled along the banks of the Elbe River, Hamburg stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of history and modernity, making it a captivating destination for tourists. With its rich maritime heritage, diverse cultural offerings, and architectural marvels, Hamburg is a city that unfolds its charms at every corner.

This vibrant city in northern Germany, offers a unique blend of rich maritime history, modern architecture, and a lively cultural scene. From the iconic Elbphilharmonie concert hall overlooking the Elbe River to the historic Speicherstadt warehouse district, Hamburg boasts a diverse range of attractions.

I love visiting Hamburg in the fall season, when the several beautiful gardens in the city turn into an artistic painting of colors. For moments of tranquility, Hamburg offers lush green spaces where one can relax soaking in the surrounding splendor.

The Altonaer Volkspark garden, spread over 200 hectares offers a vast peaceful escape, while the Planten un Blomen Botanical Gardens enchant visitors with vibrant plants and enchanting water-light concerts during summer.

For me, any successful trip to any European city begins with the correct choice of the place to stay. Therefore, I always advise you to be diligent in searching for a hotel. I chose to stay in a distinctive boutique hotel in the center of the city. Being in a boutique hotel gives you an unique experience that will remain etched in your memory for a very long time.

I choose to stay at Hotel Tortue Hamburg, the construction of which dates back to about 1900. The 'Tortue' referred to in hotel's name is borrowed from the French word for turtle. The name, and the distinct French ambiance and elegance visible throughout the hotel, is no coincidence. Hamburg was a department of Paris from 1806 to 1814, and became the 128th department of France in 1814. French influence can be seen in the many wide Parisian streets and the several French pastry shops in the city.

The French not only built great roads and bridges in the French style, but also left traces of their language and life in the city, as exemplified by the hotel's name. The turtle is reportedly famous for its calm and peaceful approach to life; this is also the policy of the hotel, which encourages you to enjoy your private time in a calm and relaxed manner.

And because the hotel applies the turtle approach to life, you will find that every detail in the hotel supports this approach. You can see the turtle engraved and drawn throughout the rooms and in the hotel decorations, restaurants and lounge.

The Tortue Hotel is considered a leading designer hotel in the world, as many world renowned interior designers participated in its design. The hotel's location is also distinctive, as it lies behind one of the most important shopping streets for international brands

Hamburg

A Tapestry of German Culture, History, and Modernity



Let us begin our exploration of the city at Jungfernstieg, a bustling promenade along the Alster Lake. Stroll through the picturesque Planten un Blomen park or embark on a boat tour to admire Hamburg's skyline. For history enthusiasts, the International Maritime Museum provides a fascinating journey through seafaring history.

If this is your first visit to Hamburg, then start at Hamburg's maritime heart, the historic Speicherstadt. This UNESCO World Heritage Site boasts red-brick warehouses, canals, and bridges, creating a picturesque backdrop. The nearby Miniatur Wunderland, the world's largest model

railway, offers a fascinating journey through intricate landscapes and miniature worlds.

Rising proudly on the Elbe River, the Elbphilharmonie is a symbol of Hamburg's modernity. Its undulating glass structure, perched atop an old warehouse, houses one of the finest concert halls globally. Visitors can enjoy panoramic views of the city from the Plaza or attend a world-class performance within its acoustically splendid halls.

Art enthusiasts can explore the Kunsthalle Hamburg, home to an extensive collection of European art spanning centuries. The



Deichtorhallen, an exhibition center for contemporary art and photography, adds a modern touch to Hamburg's cultural landscape.

Since Hamburg is famous with its delicious seafood, you must also visit the fish market and the Sternschanze area with its various seafood restaurants, and remember not to miss the Labskaus experience, which is the traditional dish of Hamburg, made from potatoes, beef and beets, along with herring, fried egg and pickles.

If you have children accompanying you on your trip, then I recommend visiting Chocoversum the city's Chocolate Museum and Factory, which will take you on a historical tour of the journey of chocolate making, in addition you can make your own cocoa after the journey and If you want to take panoramic photos of the city, do not miss visiting St Michaelis Church.



I highly recommend purchasing the Hamburg Card for each family member, which will give you free entry to many tourist attractions, in addition to great discounts and unlimited travel by public transportation.

Whether you are drawn to maritime history, cultural experiences, or simply the dynamic energy of a bustling city, Hamburg invites you to discover its many facets. With its welcoming atmosphere and array of attractions, a visit to Hamburg promises a memorable experience for travelers seeking a blend of tradition and modernity.

Noura Khan, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 60 countries since. She has around 100k followers on her blog post. @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.

Unveiling Elegance: Bridal Trends for Women in 2023



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

As the world of fashion continues to evolve, so too does the realm of bridal wear. With each passing year, brides-to-be eagerly anticipate the unveiling of the latest trends that will shape their wedding day ensembles. This year promises to be no exception, with an array of styles that blend tradition with contemporary flair.



Bridal houses like Monique Lhuillier, Vera Wang, Zuhair Murad and Georges Hobeika merged between different styles and wedding themes — exhibiting emotional couture with the finest fabric play and sparkling beading, romantic lace, figure-hugging silhouettes along with voluminous ball gown skirts. Here are some of the trends that are set to define bridal fashion for women this year and next.

Sustainable Chic: Modern brides are opting for dresses made from eco-friendly fabrics, embracing ethical production methods, and even choosing second-hand or vintage gowns. This eco-conscious approach reflects a broader cultural awareness and commitment to making thoughtful choices for a more sustainable future.

Modern Separates and Jumpsuits: The trend of bridal separates and jumpsuits continues to gain momentum, offering a contemporary alternative to the traditional wedding gown. Two-piece ensembles featuring separate tops and skirts or pants provide brides with versatility and a chance to mix and match, while jumpsuits exude a chic, modern vibe. These options cater to the bride seeking a unique and unconventional look.

Statement Sleeves: Sleeves take center stage in 2023, with brides opting for bold, statement-making designs. Puffed sleeves, bell-shaped sleeves, and intricate lace details add a touch of drama and romance to bridal silhouettes. This trend allows brides to make a fashion-forward statement while maintaining the timeless elegance associated with bridal wear.

Timeless Minimalism: For brides who favor simplicity and elegance, minimalist designs continue to be a trend in 2023. Clean lines, understated silhouettes, and simple detailing create a timeless and sophisticated look. The minimalist approach allows the bride's natural beauty to shine through, making a subtle yet powerful statement.

Intricate Back Designs: The back of the wedding dress becomes a canvas for artistry in 2023. Elaborate back designs, from open backs



and illusion lace to intricate straps, add an element of surprise and sophistication. Brides can make a stunning entrance and exit with a gown that captivates from every angle.

Veil Alternatives: The traditional veil is no longer the only option for brides seeking a touch of mystique. In 2023, capes, capelets, and even bold hats are emerging as popular alternatives. These accessories add a sense of drama and individuality, allowing brides to express their unique style on their special day.

Floral Embellishments: Floral details continue to bloom in bridal fashion, with 3D embellishments, embroidery, and appliqué taking center stage. These intricate floral elements bring a sense of romance and femininity to wedding dresses, creating a harmonious connection between the bride and the natural world.

As brides prepare to walk down the aisle, they have an array of options that cater to diverse

tastes and preferences. From sustainable choices to bold color palettes, the bridal trends of the year showcase a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity. Whether a bride envisions herself in a classic white gown or opts for a daring jumpsuit, 2023 offers a tapestry of styles, allowing each bride to weave her unique story into the fabric of her wedding day.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Need for Public Investment in Childcare



Cecilia Elena Rouse and Lisa Barrow

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This year's winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, Claudia Goldin, has been recognized for her work documenting women's changing role in the US economy over the past several decades. Far from just an interesting historical account of social progress, the topic remains deeply relevant to economic outcomes today.

Between 1950 and 2000, the labor-force participation rate for prime-age women (25-54 years old) nearly doubled in the United States, increasing by 26 percentage points, compared with a ten-point decline for prime-age men. While prime-age women's labor-force participation fell from 2007 to 2015, data through October indicate that it will reach a new record high in 2023. That means many children today are in households with a working mother. As of 2022, more than two-thirds of mothers with children under age six were in the labor force. While some are the sole earners in their households, others are in households that need two earners. In either case, the big question is: Who takes care of the children?

Recognizing women's role in the labor market means also recognizing early childhood education and care as an essential market-

“Parents typically need early childhood education and care services early in their careers, before they have reached their peak earnings. But unlike with cars and houses, they cannot take loans to pay for early childhood education and care.”

based service. Without it, both the current health of the economy and future prosperity would be jeopardized. But ensuring ample provision of market-based care is complicated, and several challenges point to the need for a greater public-sector role.

The standard justification for a government role in any market is to address externalities, that is, costs or benefits to society that would not be taken into consideration by individual market participants. In this case, many economists agree that investing in children is one of the most productive investments a society can make. Support for child health and education has been shown to yield benefits (positive



externalities) for society as a whole, not just for individual children. Among the long-term social benefits that researchers have documented are reduced crime, lower spending on public assistance, and higher tax receipts.

Despite these benefits, parents are unlikely to invest in the socially optimal level of high-quality early childhood education and care. Moreover, key features of this market suggest that the private sector will also under-provide it. For starters, high-quality education and care for young children is expensive. Because young children need a great deal of human attention, childcare will always be labor-intensive, with high quality standards requiring low child-to-adult ratios. Unlike in other parts of the economy, such as manufacturing, childcare costs have not been significantly lowered through technological innovation. High-quality care will remain expensive for the foreseeable future.

Another challenge is the lifecycle mismatch in means and needs. Parents typically need early childhood education and care services early in their careers, before they have reached their peak earnings. But unlike with cars, houses, and college tuition, they typically cannot take out loans to pay for early childhood education and care. Such demand-side challenges are ample justification for the government to intervene, either with subsidies or direct provision of some early childhood education and care.

Nor is the supply side free of problems. Owing to the razor-thin profit margins in the childcare business, many providers barely get by. Most are small, low-budget operations that cannot afford to pay employees truly livable wages. According to one analysis, childcare workers in the US earn 23 percent less on average than workers in other occupations with similar demographic characteristics. And another study found that 53 percent of childcare workers receive some form of public assistance. No wonder staff turnover in the industry is high.

Since a stable, qualified workforce is essential to high-quality care, greater public-sector investments to support staffing levels and reduce turnover are sorely needed. Yet despite this obvious need, the US lags many other countries in terms of public spending on early childhood education and care. In 2019, it ranked 34th among OECD countries, spending just 0.5 percent of GDP on early childhood education and care, compared with the OECD average of 0.8 percent.

Some economists argue that low public support for childcare, combined with the lack of other family-friendly policies, has contributed to a decline in US women's labor-force participation relative to other OECD countries. Again, this involves externalities that ultimately

affect everyone. Any standard model of economic growth will show that human capital and the size of the labor force are important factors. A well-functioning market for high-quality early childhood education and care is thus essential for helping mothers who choose (or need) to work, and for sustaining socially beneficial investments in children.

Between the high costs of childcare, the absence of credit markets to help young parents

pay for it, and the pressure on providers to contain costs by paying extremely low wages, the US public sector has more than enough reason to step in with support for both sides of the market.

Not only would such investments help millions of families balance competing demands of work and care; they would also give children a strong start in life and support their future economic well-being, as well as our own.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



New Approach to International Tax Cooperation



José Antonio Ocampo

A former United Nations under-secretary-general and a former minister of finance and public credit of Colombia, he is a professor at Columbia University, a member of the UN Committee for Development Policy, and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

As one of the world's most unequal regions, Latin America is desperately in need of additional revenues if it is to solve its knotty economic, social, and environmental problems. But tax collection in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries is low, averaging 21.7 percent of GDP in 2021, compared to 34.1 percent for OECD members. What accounts for this gap, and what should be done to close it?

Regionally, the overall lack of progressive taxation certainly plays a role. But the international tax architecture is also to blame. All too often, multinational corporations and the wealthiest in our societies can exploit the rules to avoid paying. The unfairness baked into the current system not only reflects and reproduces inequalities, but also fuels demagogic discourse and undermines faith in the rule of law.

Many of the rules that form the basis of the international tax system were drawn up a century ago by wealthy countries. No surprise, then, that these countries, and their richest citizens, benefit the most from the current framework. That is why the African Group at the

United Nations tabled a resolution in October calling for a new round of negotiations on international tax cooperation.

This process could create more equitable rules that reflect the interests of developing economies. Ensuring fairness is important, to be sure, but so is giving governments a realistic chance of generating sufficient revenue to fund sustainable development, climate action, and infrastructure investment, as well as to tackle social inequality and sovereign-debt crises.

LAC countries should welcome the UN's involvement in shaping global tax policy. For starters, the drawn-out negotiations under the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) have been disappointing for many in the Global South, who blame the initiative's lack of inclusivity

together to devise common solutions, whether at home or in global discussions. That must change.

As part of this new approach, policymakers must build on and go beyond the reallocation of taxing rights provided for in the OECD agreement. The current design, lacking a comprehensive and effective strategy for taxing mega-corporations operating in digital markets, must be reformed to ensure a more equitable redistribution of these rights.

More crucially still, even if enough BEPS members sign the multilateral treaty, securing the two-thirds Senate majority required for ratification in the United States is highly unlikely. Given that many of the world's largest tech firms are headquartered in the US, the deal would end up being written in water, and the

as finance minister) ensure that multinationals start paying their fair share of tax in the countries where they earn their profits.

At the same time, the UN process would allow for a broader reconsideration of how to close the loopholes in the international tax system. For example, the scope of reform could be widened to include coordination on taxing individual wealth. A recent study by the EU Tax Observatory shows that a 2 percent global wealth tax on the world's billionaires (roughly 3,000 people) would raise a total of \$250 billion annually, and around \$7.3 billion in Latin America alone. While the BEPS framework has normalized the idea of a global minimum tax rate for corporations, intergovernmental negotiations at the UN could do the same for ultra-wealthy individuals.

The UN is uniquely positioned to address these issues, given its universal membership and its founding principle of sovereign equality. Recent history has demonstrated that inclusiveness is a prerequisite for successful implementation of a progressive and efficient tax system. When a negotiation agenda is built collectively, the outcomes are seen as more legitimate by all parties involved, often leading to greater compliance. Moreover, at the UN, developing countries are organized into negotiating blocs, through which they gain more leverage to promote their interests.

None of the LAC countries has the political, demographic, or economic clout to influence international negotiations by itself. That is why Colombia, Brazil, and Chile have created the Regional Tax Cooperation Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean. We must now use that unified voice to support the African Group's call for a new, more inclusive UN convention on international tax cooperation.

“A recent study by the EU Tax Observatory shows that a 2 percent global wealth tax on the world's billionaires (roughly 3,000 people) would raise a total of \$250 billion annually, and around \$7.3 billion in Latin America alone.”

and flawed decision-making process. Few believe that the resulting agreement to reform international corporate taxation, even if implemented, will deliver meaningful and sustainable revenues for the developing world.

UN-led negotiations would allow LAC countries to advocate their shared interests. Despite facing common challenges when it comes to cross-border taxation, especially regarding digital businesses, we have not come

global digital economy would remain under-taxed.

In the short term, developing countries should implement unilateral measures, rather than wait for others to decide on their behalf. This could mean introducing digital-services levies or taxation based on the principle of significant economic presence. While not a comprehensive reform, such measures (which Colombia recently enacted during my tenure



Lab on a chip to detect pathogens, even cancer

The need for more accurate monitoring of the spread of infectious diseases in the community was emphasized by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the cessation of the pandemic, particularly in the public consciousness and legislative agenda, research into innovative pathogen discovery technologies have continued, given the adaptability and potential of these technologies.

Researchers reported in November the development of a new compact genetic testing device, which was originally developed for detecting COVID-19 infections, could be used to detect a range of pathogens such as bacteria, or conditions including even cancer.

Engineers at the University of Bath, in the United Kingdom, who are behind the new device named LoCKAmp, say the virus

diagnosis device gives lab-quality results in just three minutes, making it the 'world's fastest Covid test'. The prototype LoCKAmp device uses innovative 'lab on a chip' (LoC) technology, which has been proven to provide rapid and low-cost detection of COVID-19 from nasal swabs.

The device also harnesses the process known as RT-LAMP (reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification), which was employed in COVID-19 detections. The use of RT-LAMP, which rapidly multiplies specific sequences of RNA, allowed the team to quickly detect a particular virus, and enabled the device to be easily adapted to detect other pathogens.

Unlike lateral flow assay tests, commonplace during the pandemic, the LoCKAmp employs the same 'gold

standard' genetic-based testing techniques previously reserved for lab-based PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests, thus enabling rapid testing at laboratory-scale standard for the first time. As well as its accuracy, the speed of the LoCKamp sets it apart. With results shown within three minutes.

LAMP detection is also preferable to PCR testing as it has higher sensitivity, is faster and more specific. Crucially, processing takes place at a single stable temperature of 65°, instead of needing the three thermal cycles a PCR test requires. This means the device can be made easier at a portable size, and with lower power consumption.

A further benefit of the design is that no pre-processing of the nasal swab samples is required. Once a nasal swab sample is added to the device, the LoCKAmp pumps the liquid through tiny transparent 'microfluidic' channels layered onto the circuit board, above copper heaters just 0.017mm thick. These heat the sample, releasing the RNA genetic material from the virus. This is then further heated and treated with RT-LAMP chemicals to encourage multiplication. If the specific virus RNA is present in the amplified sample, it fluoresces under light — this signal is then used to denote a positive test.

Made with off-the-shelf components and factory-manufactured printed circuit boards, the prototype device could be made on a mass scale quickly and at low cost. The testing unit is projected to cost as little as £50 when it reaches mass production, while the test cartridges, currently made for £2.50, could cost less than 50 pence, said the researchers. The mass production and low operating cost of the new device presents care providers and public health authorities around the world with an effective new tool in virus



detection, especially in remote healthcare settings in the developing world.

Besides the new device's capability to analyze nasal swab samples, the LoCKAmp could also be used to carry out community-level monitoring and detection of viruses like SARS-CoV-2 that led to COVID-19, by testing wastewater. Using LoCKAmp to carry out ongoing, real-time analysis of wastewater could allow public health bodies to quickly detect the spread of viruses such as SARS-COV-2, or other infectious diseases.

Doing this via wastewater can give a broader community-wide view, rather than relying on individuals to regularly undergo nasal swab tests for a condition. The low cost and real time genetic target identification and quantification capability of LoCKamp, and the ability to detect pathogens from wastewater opens the possibilities of developing real time pathogen tracking and early-warning systems utilizing wastewater for pathogen surveillance in communities.

Sedentary lifestyles impair healthy, longer life

Over 60 percent of the global population are physically inactive, and more than two million deaths each year are attributed to sedentary lifestyle, said the World Health Organization (WHO). Inactive lifestyle also affects children with one study showing that 31 percent of children 15 years and older do not engage in sufficient physical activities. Pointing out that inactive lifestyle is among the 10 leading causes of death and disability worldwide, the WHO urged the public to 'Move for Health'.

There are many reasons for the increase in sedentary lifestyles globally, including busy work schedules, lack of available exercising spaces, increased sedentary occupations such as office work, and the widespread penetration of television viewing and usage of digital devices. Irrespective of the reasons, the importance of engaging in an active lifestyle cannot be overstated.



Various adverse health effects and risks on the human body can be traced to a sedentary lifestyle, including increase in all causes of mortality, doubling the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity, and raising the risks of colon cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, lipid disorders, depression and anxiety. Studies have shown that a sedentary lifestyle burns fewer calories causing weight gain; causes loss of muscle strength and endurance, as well as decreases mineral content of bones making them weaker.

Sedentary lifestyle also affects your metabolism making it difficult to break down fats and sugars, impair the immune system, decrease blood circulation, increase inflammation, and raise the risk of developing hormonal imbalance. Reducing sedentary behaviors and increasing physical activity are imperative to promoting health in the public.

Not having sufficient space or time for exercise need not deter people from leading a more active lifestyle. A new research published by the British Journal of Sports Medicine has found that engaging in just 22 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day within the confines of one's home could reduce mortality risks of a sedentary lifestyle.

The study, which analyzed activity levels of nearly 12,000 participants across several

countries, aimed to define what amount of time is beneficial for people to lower their mortality risk. The data was gathered by participants wearing a hip accelerometer that identified when they were still or active. The researchers found that even for those who were sedentary for 12 or more hours per day, associated mortality risk was eliminated if that 22-minute threshold was reached.

Even for those who did not quite meet the 22-minute mark, some moderate to vigorous activity still meant a drop in mortality rates. For example, those doing 10 minutes of activity who were sedentary for six hours per day still saw a drop of 32 percent in mortality risk. While the research was focused on people 50 years or older, the researchers said it could be equally applicable to younger people.

Activities such as taking a brisk walk, jogging, mowing the lawn, are considered by experts to be examples of moderate activity while hiking or playing a game of basketball generally fits into the vigorous category. Engaging in indoor body-weight exercises such as push-ups or squats, weight-training, or simply walking up and down steps can all add up to the 22-minute threshold, said the researchers.

Some other ways you can stay active within or around your house, include housework and gardening, watching and engaging in a workout video on your TV or on the internet; standing and lifting mild hand weights while chatting on the phone for long; or doing gentle yoga stretches. The study reinforces that while the type of physical activity could determine the time needed to gain health benefits, even light exercise was found to be better than a sedentary lifestyle.

Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of reducing the risk of sedentary lifestyle in youth. While children, especially those in the six to ten age range, are generally presumed to be active, our modern lifestyle has meant that most young kids in this age group are now spending a larger portion of their life cooped up on a couch nibbling snacks and watching digital screens. The habit of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and a nutritious diet usually begins in childhood, and it is important for parents and schools everywhere to encourage children to 'move more,' said the WHO.

In addition to individual lifestyle changes, governments and policy makers also have a role to play in ensuring a healthy citizenry by creating a supportive environment for people. Among the measures that the authorities can implement are introducing transportation policies that make it safer for people to walk and ride bicycles; building accessible parks, playgrounds and community centers; and promoting physical activity programs in schools, communities and health services, for all segments of society.



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