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Smoking prevalence in Kuwait down, but not out

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

On World No Tobacco Day, which falls annually on 31 May, a look at the smoking prevalence in Kuwait reveals that while the trend is downward, having become passé among many adults, an increasing number of young people are getting addicted to smoking. In particular, new smoking products, such as flavored e-cigarettes, thrust on them by tobacco companies under the guise of being harmless products, are gaining favor with youth.

In early May, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with other state agencies, launched an awareness campaign on a national

anti-smoking program aimed at protecting children from smoking. In a statement issued on the occasion, the ministry noted that the use of tobacco, both regular cigarettes and the newer vape or electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), among children was alarmingly on the rise. Surveys show that the use of e-cigarettes among children in the 13-15 age group was threefold higher than among adults.

Despite significant progress in reducing tobacco use among adults, the emergence of e-cigarettes and other new tobacco and nicotine products present a grave threat to youth, and to tobacco control initiatives, warned the World Health Organization (WHO) in a recent report. With half of all tobacco users dying prematurely, ensuring a lifetime of



profits for the tobacco industry relies heavily on recruiting new, young users, and hence its focus on young children.

"History is repeating itself, as the tobacco

industry tries to sell the same nicotine to our children in different packaging," warned WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus. Tobacco companies employ multiple tactics to gain the trust and interest of young people at an early age.

Through extensive advertising campaigns on popular social media and digital streaming platforms that are mostly unregulated, tobacco companies evade advertising regulations and unscrupulously target young people. In 1988, the WHO decided to observe World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) each year on 31 May, to focus global attention on the continued widespread prevalence of tobacco use, and its deleterious health impacts on people.

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Canada, ICRC host insightful discussion on humanitarian aid

On 27 May, the Embassy of Canada, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), hosted an event entitled 'Keeping Humanity Alive' at the Official Residence of the Canadian ambassador.

The event, marking World Red Cross Day and the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, saw the participation of Regional Head of ICRC Delegation for the GCC, Mamadou Sow, who shared personal insights and experiences from the frontlines working in the humanitarian sector. Moderated by Canadian Ambassador H.E. Aliya Mawani, the dialogue spanned a range of pressing topics, including the operational scope of ICRC's work, the significant challenges it encounters amidst global crises such as the conflict in Gaza, and its role in upholding international humanitarian law.

A key focus of Mr. Sow's address was the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary in facilitating recent prisoner exchanges between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, highlighting the complex operations and negotiations such endeavors entail. He emphasized the active essence of neutrality, stating, "Neutrality is not about standing by passively; it's about active engagement without taking sides, which allows us to deliver aid to those most in need amidst conflict."

The discussion also ventured into the evolving role of technology in modern warfare and the imperative for stronger legal



frameworks to regulate new technologies like autonomous weapons systems, ensuring they meet humanitarian standards and principles.

The event recognized Kuwait's significant role and its cooperation with international organizations like the ICRC. The enduring partnership between the ICRC, the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society has been instrumental, especially in global humanitarian operations and dialogues.

Ambassador Mawani, emphasized the strategic importance of these discussions: "It is our collective responsibility to strongly support humanitarian action.

Events like this are crucial in developing a

shared understanding of what that means and in strengthening the bonds between Canada, Kuwait, and international humanitarian entities that prioritize meeting the needs of vulnerable, conflict-affected populations I believe that full and frank dialogue is crucial as we reflect on our collective efforts and renew our commitment to addressing global humanitarian challenges together."

Reflecting on the evening, Mr. Sow shared a powerful message: "Tonight, we pulled back the curtain on the realities of humanitarian action, revealing the intense challenges and profound resilience encountered each day. Our mission transcends borders and politics — it's about preserving the flame of humanity in the

darkest of times. The support from nations like Canada and Kuwait is not just appreciated; it's vital in keeping this flame alive."

The event concluded with an engaging Q&A session where Canadian alumni, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives from civil society, private sector, and academia discussed their deep interest in and support for humanitarian efforts. This vibrant exchange not only highlighted the critical issues faced by those in conflict zones but also celebrated the strong partnership between Canada, Kuwait, and the ICRC, reinforcing their united commitment to alleviating human suffering and upholding dignity under the most challenging circumstances.



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Banking sector employs highest number of nationals

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) officials convened a meeting last week with representatives from private economic sectors to discuss increasing the proportions of national employment across various industries, and addressing the existing imbalances in the distribution of national labor in specific sectors.

The authority officials praised the banking sector's efforts in recruiting national workers, noting that the percentage of national workers in the banking sector is the highest among all private economic sectors. And, at 79 percent, the rate of nationals in the banking sector exceeded the prescribed quotas.

Working in the banking sector contributes to achieving the ambitions of young national cadres by supporting their creativity and innovation, especially given the developments in the banking industry driven by digital transformation and artificial intelligence. The banking sector also contributes to qualifying



and training young national cadres to keep pace with global developments in the banking industry, aligning with one of the sustainable development goals within Kuwait Vision 2035.

The sector also contributes indirectly to increasing the employment of national workers through its role in financing various projects and activities, which provide job opportunities for citizens and build national cadres and competencies capable of supporting the country's development process.

PAM bans outdoor work in peak hours from 1 June

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) has announced that it will begin implementing a decision to ban the employment of workers in outdoor areas during the midday hours, starting Saturday, 1 June. The ban will be in effect from 11am to 4pm daily until the end of August.

In a press statement released on 30 May, the Acting Director General of the Authority, Marzouq Al-Otaibi stated: "The authority's inspection teams will follow up on the implementation of the decision for three months, and they will conduct surprise inspection campaigns on work sites to detect any violations and record them, and take legal action against violators."





Over 30,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited Azerbaijan last year

- *H.E. Emil Karimo, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the country, stressed that there are good possibilities to increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries, especially in the fields of food industries, tourism, light industries, and agriculture.*

H.E. Emil Karimo, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the country, revealed that the number of tourists who visited Azerbaijan last year exceeded 30,000 Kuwaiti tourists. He expressed pride in their choice of Azerbaijan as a tourist destination and their love for visiting it.

Ambassador Karimov mentioned in his speech during their celebration of Independence Day, in the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Tajikistan Zubaydullo Zubaydov, that there are direct flights between the two countries via Azerbaijan Airlines (Azal) and Kuwait Airways, with Al Jazeera also offering flights. He noted that the flight time takes less than two hours.

He invited the audience to visit Azerbaijan and explore its tourist attractions. He also stressed that there are good possibilities to

increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries, especially in the fields of food industries, tourism, light industries, and agriculture.

The ambassador pointed out that Kuwait and Azerbaijan are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year. He mentioned the signing of the relevant diplomatic relations protocol on October 7, 1994. He also noted that the foundation for Azerbaijani-Kuwaiti relations was laid during the first meeting between the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, and His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Casablanca in 1994. Subsequently, the two leaders met in Copenhagen and New York in 1995.

He added that after the official visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham

Aliyev, to Kuwait in 2009, relations between the two countries entered a new phase. He explained that the relations between the two countries are close and friendly, particularly strong in the sectors of agriculture, tourism, and education.

Regarding the occasion, he said, "Today we celebrate National Independence Day. On May 28, 1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was declared for the first time in the Islamic world. State symbols, an elected parliament, and state institutes and universities were established. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1920, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was recognized, and foreign missions were approved in Azerbaijan. On October 18, 1991, Azerbaijan's independence was restored."

He added, "Azerbaijan is one of the ancient countries in the world with a rich history, culture, and famous cuisine, noting that his country has

become the leading country in the Caucasus region today."

He continued, "The first years of independence were very difficult, marked by chaos, economic crisis, a very poor social situation, and civil war. Thanks to the efforts of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani People, Heydar Aliyev, who was elected President of our country in 1993, the crisis and chaos in our country ceased."

He further added, "Today, Azerbaijan is a victorious country that liberated its lands from an occupation that lasted 30 years under the leadership of the Supreme Commander, President Ilham Aliyev, thanks to the strength and heroism of our army."

He also added, "President Ilham Aliyev is successfully continuing the political legacy of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani People, Heydar Aliyev."

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Croatia to enhance cooperation in food security with Kuwait

- *H. E. Amir Muharemi, the ambassador of Croatia to the country, emphasized that food security has become an important topic that strongly connects countries, highlighting Kuwait's excellent ties with Europe, which garner everyone's attention.*

STAFF REPORT

Ambassador of Croatia H.E. Amir Muharemi praised the strength and durability of the relationship between his country and Kuwait. The ambassador's comments on Croatia's bilateral relations with Kuwait, came in a press statement issued on the sidelines of an exhibition coordinated by the Croatian Embassy at the Al-Hamra Mall last week.

Inauguration of the exhibition, titled 'The Story of the Necktie' was attended by a large group of ambassadors and special invitees. Ambassador Muharemi noted that the exhibition serves as a brief summary highlighting the importance of the necktie throughout centuries, symbolizing cultural values and human dignity. He explained

that the name 'Cravata', the forerunner of the modern tie, originated in Croatia. Following its Croatian origins, the 'cravata' was soon adopted in France, England, Italy, and eventually America, with other countries subsequently following suit.

Expanding on relations with Kuwait, the ambassador pointed out that Croatia is an agricultural country par excellence, and added that his country and Kuwait were exploring the potential for enhancing cooperation in the field of food security.

Turning to tourism in Croatia, the ambassador noted that Croatia is a tourist destination with historical ties to Kuwait. He extended an invitation to Kuwaitis to visit his country and enjoy its picturesque nature. Emphasizing the absence of direct flights between the two

countries discouraged many Kuwaitis from visiting Croatia, he revealed that only around 1,000 visas were issued by the embassy last year. "We are discussing this issue with Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways, and hope for an approval from the two airlines in the near future.

Indicating that obtaining a visa for Croatia, which is affiliated with the Schengen Area, is done through the visa center rather than the embassy, he added that Kuwaiti citizens are granted a five-year visa for the first time.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Anne Koistinen said, "Art has a unique ability to unite people across cultures and times, whether expressed through music, sculpture, painting, photography, theater, or in this case, the necktie, as it serves as a universal

language of expression. I am committed to taking this cooperation to the next level."

Adding that the exhibition was part of the Europe Month activities in Kuwait, the ambassador noted that the 'The Story of the Necktie' is a fitting tribute to Europe Month as it beautifully narrates the art and history of the necktie. From its origins centuries ago as a functional accessory to its current status as a symbol of refinement and sophistication, the necktie represents a journey of cultural evolution and global recognition.

Ambassador Koistinen pointed out that "Croatia is the newest member state in the European Union 'family', having joined in 2013. Since then, it has made an important contribution to the functioning of the European Union."

LuLu World Food promotion sets sail on mouth-watering sea of flavors



LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, has taken customers on a delicious journey around the world with 'LuLu World Food' promotion. The two-week celebration of all things food kicked off on 29 May across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait.

The grand opening ceremony held at the hypermarket's Al Rai outlet on 29 May was a star-studded event, graced by the presence of renowned Indian Master Chef Season 8 winner Chef Mohammed Ashiq, Chef Prachi Agarkar (Master Chef Season 8), and the highly-regarded Kuwaiti Arabic Chef Terra Hamada. LuLu Kuwait's top management and representatives of the event's sponsors also joined the festivities.

The LuLu World Food promotion proved to be a smorgasbord of amazing offers and discounts across all food categories. From groceries, fresh produce, and meat and seafood to frozen foods, dairy products, and even home appliances and kitchen essentials, there was something for everyone. Shoppers had the opportunity to participate in a variety of exciting contests and competitions held throughout the promotion period at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets. Aspiring chefs put their culinary skills to the test in various competitions across different cuisines, including Arabic,

Indian, Italian, Continental, Filipino, and coming up with a variety of dishes, including desserts. Additionally, 'Wow the Master Chef' competition allowed contestants to impress Chefs Ashiq, Prachi, and Terra Hamada with their fragrant dishes.

The heartwarming 'Mom & Me' competition was not to be missed, where mothers and children teamed up to create healthy salad masterpieces. Young chefs also shone bright on their own in the 'Master Junior Chef' contests, with categories for age groups 6-10 and 11-15. Coffee enthusiasts showcased their latte art and brewing skills in the Barista Competition, while crafty bakers put their cake decorating talents on display in the Cake Challenge.

There were enticing prizes for all winners, including consolation prizes for all the participants. For those seeking cooking inspiration, there were chit-chat sessions with the Master Chefs and live cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs.

The LuLu World Food promotion was a true celebration of global gastronomy, with the hypermarket serving the world on a platter to its customers through a variety of cuisines like Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Thai, and many more. 'Desi Dhaba' gave shoppers a taste of Northern India and for health-



conscious foodies, the 'Healthy Eats' section offered fresh salads, cheeses, and olives. Meat lovers rejoiced at the 'Meet a Meat' section, while seafood lovers swam in a sea of flavors at the 'Go Fish' section.

The sweet-toothed soothed their sweet cravings with the 'Best Bake' and 'Cake so Cookies' sections, while the traditionalists delved into traditional flavorful spices of Kerala at the 'Naadan Thattukada' corner. A must-visit for all was the 'Kitchen-Must-Have' section that offered essential kitchenware to elevate culinary creations. The highlight of the promotion was the special Global Cuisine Street Food' counters at all outlets of the hypermarket, which offered a taste of South Indian, North Indian, Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Continental, and more dishes to whet

every taste bud.

Throughout the promotion, LuLu Hypermarket excited visitors and shoppers alike with some of the biggest and longest food items ever seen. The amazing 'Longest Taco Shawarma', the 'Biggest Burger', and the 'Biggest Pizza', as well as the 'Biggest Biryani' and the 'Longest Zings Fillet', blew everyone's minds. The wondrous displays continued with the 'Biggest Bazbooza', a 'Biryani Dhamaka', the 'Longest Mexican Crispy Wrap Sandwich', the 'Longest Lotus Cake' and much more.

This promotion was made possible by the support of sponsors such as Alwazan, Bayara, Afia, Betty Crocker, Nature Valley, Americana, Sadia, Lamb Weston, Arla, Puck, Kraft, Kitco, Nestle, IFFCO, Noor, London Dairy, McCain, President, Panasonic, Kenwood, and Moulinex.

The "LuLu World Food" promotion may have drawn to a close, but the culinary adventures it ignited are just beginning. With a newfound appreciation for global cuisines, exciting recipes to try, and kitchens equipped with fantastic finds, LuLu Hypermarket's customers are now perfectly prepared to embark on a delicious journey of their own. From exploring the spice markets of Morocco, to savoring the fresh seafood of the Mediterranean, or indulging in the rich curries of India, their taste buds will be their compass.

Austria honors Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for strengthening ties

STAFF REPORT

Austrian Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen has honored Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Sadiq Marafi with the prestigious Star of the Republic of Austria award in recognition of Ambassador Marafi's exceptional efforts in promoting bilateral relations between Kuwait and Austria.

On 27 May, Austrian Ambassador H.E. Marian Alexander Wrba, presented the Grand Decoration of Honor in Gold with Star to Ambassador Marafi at the Austrian Residence in Kuwait.

Ambassador Marafi served as Kuwait's ambassador to Austria for over nine years, significantly enriching the relationship between the two nations. During his tenure, he was highly active and dedicated to strengthening the traditionally friendly ties between Kuwait and Austria. He also played a prominent role among the group of Arab ambassadors to Austria.

Ambassador Marafi has been instrumental in enhancing political contacts with Austrian foreign policy. Notable diplomatic achievements include facilitating Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl's visit to Kuwait in December 2018 and Austrian Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's visit in March 2019. Additionally, he was pivotal in agreeing upon a Memorandum of Understanding



on regular political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Kuwait and Austria that the Austrian and Kuwaiti Foreign Ministers signed during the official visit of Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Vienna in June 2023.

Beyond his diplomatic and political contributions, Austria recognized Sadiq Marafi's important role in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue between the Arab world and Europe. Being chairman of the Council of Arab Ambassadors in Vienna, he also collaborated with the Austrian Foreign Ministry to organize the

Austrian-Arab Cultural Year 2020. This initiative included a festival concert at the Viennese Hofburg by the Kuwaiti JACC Orchestra, which Marafi brought to Vienna, garnering substantial positive attention from the Austrian public.

In addition to his ambassadorial duties, Sadiq Marafi has been an essential member of the board of the Ban Ki-moon Centre in Vienna since its inception, providing significant support to its work. As a key decision-maker in the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, Sadiq Marafi will continue to play an essential role in fostering cooperation

between Kuwait and the European countries, the European Union, and Austria.

In addition to substantial trade volume with growth potential and major Austrian investments in Kuwait, such as the construction and operation of one of the world's largest and most modern sewage treatment plants in Umm Al-Hayman, Kuwait is a crucial regional political partner for Austria. Austria considers Kuwait an important mediator and bridge builder in the region, making it a vital point of contact in the Gulf and the Middle East.

City Hypermarket to host tourism exhibition

Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

City Hypermarket will host a Tourism Exhibition at The Manara Mall in Kuwait on 28 June from 11am to 5pm. The exhibition will showcase tourism destinations by embassies of participating countries, as well as tour packages, travel and stay facilities by travel agencies and airlines. The exhibition aims to bring citizens and residents in Kuwait to discover the various destinations, package tours, visa application procedures and airline rates for the summer holidays.

The event seeks to provide a platform to participants in the exhibition to present their services to the public. Twelve embassies along with twelve airlines and travel agencies have signed on to participate in the exhibition.



Embassies are also expected to use the opportunity to showcase cultural presentations, provide information on their countries popular destinations via tourism videos and added information on visa processing. Travel agencies will be invited to participate and provide the latest tour packages and suggest destinations offered by their companies.

In a brief comment, Nermeen Bishasy the head of Marketing at City Hypermarket stated that the Manara Mall is an ideal venue for the participants of tourism exhibition although most of its shoppers are mixed but are predominantly citizens and Arabs "This exhibition hopes to provide platform to the exhibitors to present and promote their brands and services in time for the summer holidays" commented Bishasy.

Senior Marketing Executive Riem ElGhalban added that influencers and social media personalities will be invited to assist in promoting to the public the event. Berry Blast Cafe and Restaurant will be providing delicacies for free taste and sale of their products. The event is rendered media support by The Times Kuwait and Nirem Productions.

To participate as an exhibitor call: 55650296 or directly visit the Manara Mall.



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Joint steering committee approves rail link feasibility study

Kuwait-Saudi higher steering committee approved during its sixth meeting the feasibility study of the rail link project between Kuwait City and Riyadh, said Kuwait's Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Meshaan.

"The endorsement of the project reflects a shared desire by the two sisterly countries to build a sustainable and coherent future for the people of the Gulf region," she said in a statement following the meeting on 30 May. Dr. Al-Meshaan welcomed the visit to Kuwait by Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistic Services Saleh



bin Nasser Al-Jasser and his entourage, saying it is "an important step on the road to enhanced strategic cooperation between both countries."

Pointing out that the joint committee held online meetings with the managing teams of the railroad link project daily, the minister said this would contribute to speeding up work on the rail link project. The Kuwait-Saudi railway link is considered as being vital to advancing economic development and integration among member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and will definitely open new horizons for logistic services and benefit the peoples of both countries, said Dr. Al-Meshaan.

On a similar note, Al-Jasser expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the meetings of the joint steering committee which he said will enhance cooperation and integration between both countries. "The meetings with the Kuwaiti officials have been very fruitful and showed a strong constructive will to advance cooperation in the field of transport and logistics," said the Saudi minister. He noted that the visit to Kuwait fell in the framework of the sovereign instructions from the high leaderships of the both countries for promoting economic and trade cooperation.



Building cultural bridges through Spanish, Arabic, Western music

A musical concert organized by the Belgian Embassy at the Yarmouk Cultural Center on 26 May, as part of 'Europe Month' helped build cultural bridges through the Spanish, Arabic, Western mix of music rendered by talented Belgian musician Karim Baghili and his band.

In a speech delivered on the occasion, Ambassador of Belgium H.E. Christian Domes said: "I am honored and pleased to welcome all of you to the Yarmouk Cultural Center, where tonight we will listen to a concert by a Belgian band led by Karim

Baghili, a Belgian composer, guitarist, and oud player, started playing the electric guitar at the age of sixteen and has been composing ever since. At the age of twenty, he was introduced to the world of flamenco and was impressed by the mastery of the Spanish flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia. He taught himself and worked hard on the different techniques of the flamenco guitar. At the same time, during a trip to Jordan, he acquired an oud and added new sounds to his compositions."

"His passion for music has led him to many projects as a composer or arranger, including CDs, short films, documentaries, and more recently, feature films. He has performed many concerts on beautiful stages, both small and large, in Belgium and abroad, including London, Dubai, Kuwait, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, just to name a few, said the ambassador. He concluded by adding, "Karim Baghili is accompanied on stage by guitarist Yuri Nanai, drummer Vivien Ladière, and sound engineer Thierry Gillies."

In her comments at the music concert, Ambassador of the European Union H.E. Anne Koistinen, expressed her strong belief in the power of culture, especially music, to connect people. "It is a form of communication without words... You simply listen, and you can create your own images and understanding." For this reason, it is also very important here in Kuwait that we not only explore European music but also the blend of international melodies. We can see how it resonates with the Kuwaiti audience."

The ceremony was attended by Khaled Al-Yassin, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, along with a large crowd of citizens and ambassadors accredited to the country.



Baghili. The concert is held on the occasion of Europe Month, in which Belgium proudly participates, being responsible for the current Presidency of the Council of the European Union." He added, "We are also celebrating the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations with Kuwait, so, on this special occasion, we are pleased to present to you an artist who contributes to building bridges between Spanish, Arabic and Western music."

The ambassador continued, "Karim

NAPA celebrates 37th anniversary with mesmerizing dance drama

Nritta Dhyana Academy for Performing Arts (NAPA), based in Salmiya, celebrated its 37th anniversary with an unforgettable event at the Aspire Bilingual School in Abbasiya last week.

This milestone occasion was a testament to the academy's dedication to preserving and promoting the rich heritage of Indian classical dance. The evening was graced by distinguished guests, including Ambassador of Sri Lanka H. E. Kandeepan Bala, and Ram Krishnamani, a renowned author from the United States.

The presence of Jerry Alwyn from Jerry's Journey Production Company, Shirley Dennis, director of the Indian School of Excellence Kuwait, Ananthi Natrajan, proprietor of Saravana Bhavana Vegetarian Restaurant, Principal Ritu Mathur of Integrated Indian School, and Shoug al Shirazi, a prominent Kuwaiti travel influencer and content creator, added to the event's prestige.

The event also featured the launch of Mr. Krishnamani's book, 'Shall We Dance', which was unveiled by the Sri Lankan ambassador. This added a literary touch to the evening, celebrating the confluence of art and literature. The evening began with two invocatory performances by NAPA's students, showcasing their incredible talent and mastery of Bharatanatyam. These performances set the stage for the main event — the highly anticipated dance drama, 'Lankeshwara: A Musical Tale of the Vanquished King'.

Conceptualized, directed, and choreographed by Kalakshetra Guru Smt. Arundhati Singha John, who also serves as the Artistic Director, 'Lankeshwara' was a theatrical masterpiece that held the audience on the edge of their seats. The students, adorned in meticulously designed costumes, portrayed various characters with such authenticity and conviction that it transported the audience back to the golden age of theater. The props, crafted with precision by Unnikrishnan Kurup, added a breathtaking flair to the production, enhancing the overall visual experience. A notable highlight was the stage backdrop, a magnificent hand-painted creation by Rajeev Devanandanam, marking a first in Kuwait's theater history. Its grandeur and artistic finesse were a visual treat, providing a perfect setting for the drama.

The narrative of 'Lankeshwara' unfolded with intricate choreography and compelling storytelling, capturing the audience's imagination and emotions. The performance concluded with a standing ovation, a testament to the outstanding execution and profound impact it had on everyone present. The authenticity of the acting and the dedication of the students to their roles were commendable, evoking nostalgic memories of classic theater plays.



The event was a flawless demonstration of NAPA's professionalism and meticulous attention to detail. Every aspect, from the performances to the event management by NAPA's core team, was executed with precision, creating an enchanting ambiance that transported the audience back to the ancient tales of Lanka.

In conclusion, NAPA's 37th-anniversary celebration was a resounding success, blending tradition, artistry, and excellence. It was an evening that not only celebrated the academy's rich legacy but also set a new benchmark in Kuwait's cultural landscape.



Kuwait to participate in global water conference in Tajikistan

The conference, which will take place in June, aims to exchange best practices, enhance partnerships, promote water's role in sustainable development, and accelerate progress towards 2030 water-related SDG targets.

STAFF REPORT

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, lauded the robust bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Kuwait, especially in the political sphere, and their shared interests on various issues. He also announced Kuwait's high-level participation in the upcoming 'Dushanbe Water Conference' to be held in June.

During a press conference held at the embassy, the ambassador highlighted the significance of the Third High-Level Conference on the 'International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028).

Pointing out that Tajikistan has been leading international water-related issues under the UN umbrella for two decades, he added that the conference, which is scheduled to take place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 10 - 13 June, is part of the 'Dushanbe Water Process'. He emphasized that

Ambassador Zubaydov explained that the primary objective of the conference is to further strengthen joint efforts, support the implementation of voluntary commitments recorded in the UN Water Conference's Water Action Plan, stimulate new partnerships, and accelerate actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The ambassador added that the Dushanbe Water Conference also aims to exchange best practices and innovative solutions, enhance stakeholder partnerships, promote the role of water in sustainable development, raise awareness, and mobilize political will to accelerate progress towards achieving water-related SDG targets by 2030. Additionally, it will contribute to the 2024 'High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development' and the preparatory



process for the '2026 UN Water Conference'.

"We will continue joint integrated efforts to address water and climate issues within the UN framework and through close cooperation with sisterly and friendly countries, primarily the State of Kuwait," the ambassador stated.

He expressed gratitude and appreciation to Kuwait's leaders and government, as well as the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their continued support of Tajikistan in activating its international initiatives, particularly those related to water resources. Ambassador Zubaydov commended Kuwait's unwavering and systematic role in achieving sustainable development goals at national, regional, and international levels, including SDG 6, which aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

"The State of Kuwait has active participation and a distinguished presence in all conferences and events organized by Tajikistan within the framework of water initiatives and the 'Dushanbe Water Process'," he said. "We look forward to Kuwait's high-level participation in the upcoming conference, and we believe Kuwait will play a prominent role in the success of this conference."

Highlighting his country's strengths in water, the ambassador noted, "We have the largest hydropower plant in Tajikistan and can export electricity and water to neighboring countries. We also seek UN and neighboring countries' support in the electricity and water sectors, and we are ready to collaborate with neighboring and Gulf countries".

For her part, Ghada Hatim Eltahir Mudawi, the UN resident coordinator in Kuwait, emphasized the importance of access to water as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of sustainable development for all nations. Noting that many countries are striving to secure safe

and clean water, Eltahir added that more than 2.2 billion people live in water-scarce situations. She expressed the UN's appreciation for Tajikistan's role and the initiatives it has taken to address water issues. She highlighted that Kuwait is one of the countries affected by climate change and that the water issue is crucial for Kuwait. She praised Kuwait's efforts to provide water for all and to address climate change. She also highlighted the programs provided by the UN to Kuwait in relation to sustainable development and Kuwait's 2035 Vision, as well as consultations in the areas of water, environment, and sand and dust storms.

Biometric fingerprinting to address dual nationality issue

The government is swiftly advancing the process of biometric fingerprinting in a bid to complete the Gulf biometric link project on schedule. The initiative to link biometric fingerprinting details among the Gulf countries will help detect all cases of dual nationality among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and automatically resolve the issue of dual nationality.

An informed source on the matter revealed that in the past, there were manipulations with names that confused the authorities and



hindered the identification of dual nationals. But now, even if the entire quadruple name of the dual national between Kuwait and any other Gulf country is different, it will be revealed because the fingerprint does not lie, and its result is certainty that knows no doubt.

Biometric fingerprints are expected to help close the file on dual nationality easily and reveal dual citizens who may use different identities and documents in their movements between countries. This issue is a common Gulf concern due to the social, economic, and financial burdens it carries.

In Kuwait, the law is very clear with regard

to the fate of dual nationals — Anyone holding another nationality will have their Kuwaiti nationality immediately revoked.

There is no possibility of allowing the dual national to choose between nationalities, as the law confirms 'immediate withdrawal' of Kuwaiti nationality for dual nationals. The process of biometric linking between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is understood to be nearing completion, especially after Kuwait finished the task of taking biometric fingerprints from citizens before the September 30 deadline announced by the Ministry of Interior.

If someone forges nationality using false names, the discovery will depend on the concerned party filing a complaint with the responsible authorities about the forgery and allegations. Accordingly, necessary investigations are carried out, and all legal measures are taken, starting with the loss of nationality and continuing through all stages of the criminal investigation and the resulting legal effects on the offender."

It is noteworthy that the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Addressing the Situations of Illegal Residents met a few days ago under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef.

The meeting was attended by the head of the agency, Saleh Al-Fadala, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Salem Al-Muzain, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and other members of the Board of Directors. They reviewed a number of emerging topics and made decisions regarding them.

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Georgia hails solid relations, fruitful cooperation with Kuwait

The Georgian embassy in Kuwait noted the rising number of Kuwaiti tourists visiting Georgia. This increase is aided by direct flights from Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways to Georgian cities, including a new route to Batumi by the airline, and visa exemptions for Kuwaiti citizens and residents.



STAFF REPORT

In a statement issued on the occasion of celebrations held to mark the country's Independence Day, the Embassy of Georgia noted that Georgia and Kuwait enjoy an increasingly close and multidimensional friendship and cooperation, for which we extend special thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, whose wisdom turned Kuwait into an island of calm in the sea of regional turmoil. His Highness also stimulated the positive dynamic in bilateral partnership between Georgia and Kuwait, making our cooperation more solid and fruitful.

The embassy also praised Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya for Kuwait's continued and explicit support for Georgia's sovereignty and

territorial integrity, as well as building consensus on global issues and multilateral cooperation. "Kuwait is truly Georgia's main international partner, and we strive to advance this strengthened partnership to a qualitatively new level," the statement added.

The statement indicated that the Georgian government attaches utmost importance to deepening political and economic cooperation with Kuwait, and strives to strengthen relations in the field of tourism, culture and education, stressing the intention of the Georgian government to facilitate increased investment and trade partnership with Kuwait.

Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, who was the chief guest on the occasion described Kuwaiti-Georgian relations as good. The event

was attended by a large number of diplomats and heads of diplomatic missions and citizens.

Noting that Georgia was listed among the top ten countries from among 190 countries in the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' index in terms of convenience for investors to conduct their business, the embassy invited Kuwaiti businessmen to visit Georgia and explore the opportunities that Georgia can offer to businesses. The statement added that given Georgia's exceptionally business-friendly environment and the benefits of Georgia's continued integration into the European Union single market, there are many great opportunities for Kuwaitis to invest in Georgia's hospitality, real estate and energy sectors.

The embassy also pointed out that Georgia is witnessing a boom in tourism, as it is characterized by an amazingly diverse landscape that ranges

from the highest mountains in Europe to the subtropical coast. And its rich cultural and culinary traditions, with more than seven million international travelers visiting Georgia last year.

The embassy highlighted that an increasing number of Kuwaiti tourists were visiting Georgia, facilitated by visa exemption for Kuwaiti citizens and residents of Kuwait, as well as direct flights by Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways to several Georgian cities, including the latest city of Batumi by Jazeera Airways.

The embassy statement concluded by expressing gratitude to Ambassador Sadiq Marafi for "honoring us with his presence and we look forward to the lasting friendship between Georgia and Kuwait, which will stimulate a new wave of enhanced cooperation in the field of trade, investment and people-to-people exchange."

Explora Journeys, ITL World forge partnership in luxury travel experiences

Explora Journeys, the luxury lifestyle brand of the MSC Group, announced a strategic partnership in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with ITL World, a leading travel management company in the Middle East. The collaboration aims to bring bespoke luxury travel experiences to discerning Saudi and Kuwaiti travelers, combining Explora Journeys' sophisticated cruise offerings with ITL World's regional expertise.



Travelers have the opportunity to immerse themselves in cosmopolitan, European luxury at sea. On every journey, guests can enjoy elegant suites with a private ocean-front terrace, nine unforgettable inclusive culinary experiences, high-speed Wi-Fi via Starlink connectivity, vibrant entertainment and ocean-inspired wellness.

With this partnership, ITL World will leverage its extensive

network and expertise in travel management to introduce Explora Journeys' unique offerings to a broader audience in Saudi Arabia enhancing the luxury ocean travel options available to discerning travelers.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Saudi Aramco Travel Show 2024, Executive Director, Explora Journeys, Angelo Capurro, said, "We are delighted to partner with ITL World, a company that shares our vision of providing truly transformative travel experiences. This collaboration will allow us to bring our unique journeys to a wider audience in the Middle East, offering them the chance to explore the world in unparalleled luxury."

Chairman & Managing, ITL World, Dr. Siddeek Ahmed, added, "Our partnership with Explora Journeys underscores our commitment to offering the best in luxury travel to our guests in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. We are excited to combine our local expertise with Explora Journeys' exceptional offerings to create unique and memorable travel experiences."

Setting a new standard in luxury ocean travel, Explora Journeys, offers discerning travelers the perfect blend of discovery and sophistication, combining celebrated destinations with off-the-beaten-path ports, inviting travelers to immerse themselves in the essence of exploration.

With overnights and longer stays at destinations, guests can delve deep into local cultures and experiences, creating memories that last a lifetime. Journeys start at 7 nights and can extend to 14 or 21 nights, all departing from easily accessible ports.

Oceanliner EXPLORA 1's 461 ocean-front suites, penthouses, and residences boast European elegance and unrivaled space, ranging from 35 sqm to 280 sqm. Suites feature spacious terraces, walk-in wardrobes, and heated bathroom floors, ensuring utmost comfort and privacy.

The outdoor areas on Explora Journeys' ships are equally impressive, with expansive decks offering over 6,200 sqm of breathtaking sea views. Guests can bask in the sun or relax in four pools and whirlpools, immersing themselves in the Ocean State of Mind. Designed by leading European architect studios and built by Fincantieri, the ships embody relaxed modern luxury with a vibrant and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Yacht-inspired design elements and attention to detail elevate the onboard experience, setting Explora Journeys apart as a leader in luxury travel.

Five Kuwaiti companies among the largest in MENA region

Five Kuwaiti companies have made it to the top positions on MEED magazine's list of the 100 largest listed companies in the Middle East in terms of market capitalization. Kuwait Finance House (KFH) came in first place among Kuwaiti companies, followed by National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) in second, Boubyan Bank in third, Zain Group in fourth, and finally Mabane Company in fifth place.

The report noted that the total market value of the top Kuwaiti companies reached \$84.4 billion, with Kuwait Finance House (KFH) occupying 11th place among the top 100 companies in the Middle East with a market capitalization of \$41.2 billion. National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) came in 18th place regionally with a market capitalization of \$24.3 billion, followed by Boubyan Bank in 49th place with a market capitalization of \$8.3 billion, then Zain Group in 57th place with a market capitalization of \$6.8 billion, and finally Mabane Company in 99th place regionally with a market capitalization of \$3.8 billion.

The top 10 companies on MEED's list in the Middle East included: Saudi Aramco in first place with a market capitalization of \$1.95 trillion, followed by International Holding Company (UAE) with a market capitalization of \$236.6 billion, then ACWA Power (Saudi Arabia) with \$94 billion, and Emirates Power (UAE) with a market capitalization of \$88 billion. In fifth place came Al-Rajhi Bank (Saudi Arabia) with a market capitalization of \$85.9 billion, sixth ADNOC Gas (UAE) with a market capitalization of \$63.8 billion, seventh SABIC (Saudi Arabia) with \$63.3 billion, eighth Saudi National Bank with \$55.1 billion, ninth Saudi Telecom Company with \$50.9 billion, and tenth Saudi Arabian Mining Company with \$50.2 billion. The total value of these 10 companies boasted a staggering \$2.74 trillion.

The magazine said that despite high geopolitical risks, and the combined value of the 100 largest listed companies on MEED's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region list falling slightly to \$3.7 trillion this year, from \$3.8 trillion in 2023, the region's large-cap stocks have largely maintained their positions. Overall, the stability of MEED's Top 100 list at around \$3.7 trillion to \$3.8 trillion over the past three years is a sign of increasing maturity in MENA's capital markets amidst a wave of initial public offerings (IPOs) and growing diversity among listed companies and funds. Encouragingly, even during this period of heightened geopolitical uncertainty, major stocks in the region have not witnessed significant decline.

'Travel Health Service' launched across Kuwait



to provide the "Travel Health Service" do so through a number of primary health care centers in all governorates of the country. The service is provided in the Raqai Health Center in Farwaniya Governorate on Sundays and Thursdays, while in Jahra Governorate the service is provided through the Eye Health Center on Sundays and Wednesdays. In Hawalli Governorate, Travel Health services are provided at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital on Mondays and Wednesdays. In the Capital Governorate, the service is provided through the Abdul Rahman Abdul Maghani Center in Fayhaa area, and in Ahmadi Governorate through the Ahmadi Health Center on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week. In Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, the service is provided through the Zahra Health Center.

"Work in these clinics will be during the morning hours during official working hours, and the "Travel Health Service" is provided throughout the year and on all days of the week, through the main clinic in the Public Health Department in Shuwaikh area," he said.

He pointed out that among the services provided by these clinics are health advice before travel and after returning to the country, providing information about prevalent diseases, safety and disease prevention information during trips, providing the necessary vaccinations to prevent infectious diseases according to the travel destination, in addition to providing preventive medicines such as malaria drugs.

Kuwaiti Ministry of Health launches a new "Travel Health Service" starting Sunday, providing comprehensive travel health support for residents.

The Ministry of Health has launched the "Travel Health Service" through six clinics in all governorates of the country, starting tomorrow, Sunday. Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad said that the service provides health advice, information about diseases, safety during trips, and preventive services according to the travel destination.

He explained that the clinics designated



Exciting events mark Asian Exhibition at City Hypermarket



By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

The Asian Exhibition 2024 held on 24 May at City Hypermarket in Salmiya was a resounding success with seven Asian embassies showcasing products, services, tourism venues and cuisines of their countries..

The event commenced with the official ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Ambassadors of Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Japan and South Korea. Embassies exhibited displays of artifacts from each participating country.

Cuisines included restaurants from Berry Blast, Everest, Vinta, Monalicious, Hangout, Jollibee and Chowking, Nirem Productions and Coffilia and Warung Samia provided free tasting and sales of their products to visitors

Metro Clinic offered free medical consultations, while Khalid Al Hussaini Law Firm provided legal assistance. Meanwhile, ITL International Travel, KDD, Saija, LBC Cargo,

OWWA, Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops and The Times Kuwait lend support to the event..

Several performing groups from Indonesia and Nepal rendered a variety of cultural and traditional dances, with vocal renditions from Megat Hisham from Malaysia, Consul Nikki Zubhana from Indonesia, and Jummel Carvajal from Philippines, while Z Crew and Zayaw Q8 provided backup. The exhibition also highlighted games and activities, with prizes awarded to winners by Friendi Mobile, Saija Perfumes and KDD.

Hundreds of guests and shoppers dropped by to visit the exhibition from 1am till 5pm on Friday. The event ended with a presentation of tourism videos from different participating embassies. Organizers of the event announced that a tourism exhibition will be held soon at the City Hypermarket at the Manara Mall in Shuwaikh. The event will showcase embassies and travel agencies.

Organizers expressed thanks to City Hypermarket management and staff for their tireless support to make the event a success.

MEW urges public to moderate electricity consumption

Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW) warned that pressure on the electricity grid reached a record high on Friday, 31 May, putting additional pressure on the national electricity grid.

The record consumption for this period of the year exceeded 16,149 megawatts at 3pm on Friday, said the ministry in a statement. The ministry urged the public to moderate consumption, and switch off or limit the use of electrical appliances and equipment during peak hours in summer so as to conserve energy and reduce strain on the electricity grid.

Kuwait experienced an intense heat wave last week with temperature exceeding 49 degrees



Celsius on Friday, and consequently increasing the pressure on electricity consumption due to the heavy reliance on air conditioning devices.

PACI urges residents who change residence to update addresses

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has invited approximately 5,500 individuals to review and update their residential addresses by submitting the necessary supporting documents within 30 days from 26 May.

The authority announced the cancellation of the residential addresses of 5,501 people based on information provided by the housing owner or due to the demolition of the building.. The Authority called on those who changed their address to register their new addresses within 30 days, or be subject to the penalty stipulated in Article 33 of Law No. 32 of 1982, which is a fine of not more than KD100, depending on the number of people.

Mansour Al-Mizan, the Director General of the Authority, explained in a media statement that "changing the residential address invalidates the civil ID card, and its owner must visit the Authority's headquarters or one of its branches to update the card data by bringing the rental contract, the rent receipt, and an acknowledgment from the owner of the validity of the data." He noted that "the person concerned must bring the new house document if the owner of the card is the same



as the owner of the property."

Explaining that "the procedure can be done through the 'Sahel' application without visiting the authority, Al-Mizan pointed out that "if the authority learns that the address has been deleted, it sends a text message alert to the person concerned on the Sahel application. If the person does not respond, their civil card will be suspended and canceled from the 'My Identity' application, while remaining in Sahel so they can update their data. Additionally, their name will be published in the Official Gazette (Kuwait Today), and they will be given a specific period to comply with the law. If they still fail to respond, they will be referred to the judiciary."

Al-Mizan called on government and private agencies to ensure the validity of individuals' civil cards and "not to rely on the optical image of the card to conduct transactions or sign contracts, unless it is confirmed that the civil card is in 'Sahel' or 'My ID.'"

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Thought “ for the week

The only time
you fail is when you
fall down and stay down.

- Stephen Richards, Author

MoI to scrap vehicles involved in reckless driving



Ministry of Interior (MoI) has issued a warning that in addition to drivers involved in reckless driving facing severe fines and penalties, the vehicles involved in such reckless acts will be impounded and sent to the scrapyard for crushing as they jeopardize the lives of people.

The ministry said in a media statement that the law will be decisively applied to all violators, and is part of security measures

intended to make driving safer for all drivers. The statement added that the ongoing traffic campaigns, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Logistics and Supply, have started implementing this punishment.

The ministry urged the public to contact the emergency number (112) or send messages on the traffic department's WhatsApp number: 99324092, in case they witness any irrational acts on the road.

Smoking prevalence in Kuwait down...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The day highlights endeavors by WHO to combat tobacco usage worldwide, as well as draw attention to the tobacco industry's insidious practices aimed at negating attempts to curtail smoking.

Latest health figures from WHO show that smoking kills more than eight million people each year, including an estimated 1.3 million non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke. In 2020, approximately 22 percent of the global population used tobacco (36.7% of men and 7.8% of women).

To address the tobacco epidemic and implement policies that work towards tobacco cessation, in 2003, the World Health Assembly adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Although 90 percent of the world's population is now covered by the FCTC, it is estimated that less than half (49%) of the countries will meet the target of reducing tobacco use by 30 percent by 2025.

Kuwait ratified the WHO treaty in 2019, however, long before ratifying the WHO Protocol, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Kuwait was pioneering tobacco cessation services as part of its tobacco control policies. It is noteworthy that the first tobacco cessation clinic in the region opened in Kuwait in the early 1980s. By 2003, there were cessation clinics in every governorate, providing medical assessment, nicotine replacement therapy and counseling.

The forward-thinking outlook by MoH has helped shape the state's tobacco control strategies that have resulted in a significant drop in smoking among the public. A health survey conducted by MoH, in cooperation with the WHO in 2014 showed that the average prevalence of smoking in Kuwait was 21.3 percent in the 18-69 age group — a significant drop from the 34 percent recorded in 1995 and the 27.2 percent observed in 2006.

Nevertheless, given the country's relatively small population, the prevalence rate is considered high, and is an indicator of potential increase in heart disease and chronic non-communicable diseases in the future. Additionally, building on the 21.3 percent prevalence rate, the WHO predicts deaths attributable to smoking could be more than 345,000, or nearly half of the 670,000 smokers alive today.

The global health body warned that unless stronger policies, including large tax increases on tobacco products, stringent marketing restrictions, strong health warnings, stricter laws on smoking, a comprehensive cessation program, and an effective mass media campaigns are implemented the death toll from smoking could continue to rise each year.

In 1995, Kuwait introduced its Anti-Smoking Law 15/1995. Among others, the law prohibits the cultivation and importation of tobacco seed and seedlings, and the manufacture of all forms of cigarettes. The sale or presentation of cigarettes and other tobacco derivatives to people below the age of 21 is prohibited. Smoking is forbidden in enclosed and semi-enclosed public places and in public means of transportation. Advertising of

cigarettes and all types of tobacco products and its necessities is also banned.

However, rigorous implementation of many of these laws has been lacking, especially with regard to new tobacco products such as e-cigarettes. Kuwait does not prohibit import or sale of e-cigarettes. Although in 2011, the General Administration of Customs had issued a ban on import of all e-cigarette products, the ban was withdrawn in 2016, allowing companies to import 'e-shishas and flavored products'.

In 2022, the government also decided to delay the imposition of an earlier planned 100 percent tariff on e-cigarettes and their flavors. The WHO stresses that governments seeking to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction should either ban e-cigarettes, also known as Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) entirely or regulate them strictly as medicinal products or use the WHO's FCTC measures.

Tobacco companies invest enormous amounts of money in lobbying against tobacco control policies, and funds organizations that promote its interests. It uses different ways to spread misinformation, including through front groups and third parties, social media influencers, sponsored events, funding scientists and biased research. Despite tobacco killing over eight million people each year, the industry blatantly continues producing trillions of cigarettes that earn them billions of dollars in profit each year.

Meanwhile, a report by the WHO and the National Cancer Institute in the United States estimated the global economic burden of tobacco usage from healthcare costs and lost productivity at USD1.8 trillion annually, or around 1.8 percent of global GDP. Almost 40 percent of this cost occurs in low- and middle-income countries, (LMICs) where nearly 80 percent of the world's 1.3 billion tobacco smokers live with limited access to tobacco cessation and treatment facilities.

Over the years, in response to irrefutable scientific evidence linking tobacco smoking to lung cancer and other illnesses, as well as growing public and political pressure to control tobacco usage, as well as multiple lawsuits filed against them, the tobacco industry began introducing new products camouflaged as being safer choices. Filtered and low-tar versions of cigarettes promised a 'healthier smoke'; vaping or e-cigarettes were claimed to be a 'safer alternative'; and the latest avatar of tobacco, nicotine pouches, is being touted as helping 'reduce harm'.

The tobacco industry's deceiving tactics highlight the urgent need for strong regulations to protect people, especially the young from a lifetime of harmful dependence. Youth organizations from around the world that participated in the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP10) in February, delivered a powerful message to policy makers — "Future generations will remember you as the ones who protected them, or the ones who failed them and put their lives in danger."

RECIPE

Instant Mango Coconut Rolls



Mango fans everywhere would absolutely agree that there is nothing to beat mango as the ultimate refreshing summer dessert. The yummy mango coconut roll recipe below is very easy and quick to make. Mango coconut roll is a popular Indian sweet where white bread slices with rich and flavorful stuffing are dunked in mango milkshake. The bread soaks up all the flavor and becomes super delicious. Remember to avoid using wheat bread, multigrain bread, or sourdough because they will not give you the same taste and texture.

Total time: 20 minutes
Serving: 4 rolls

Ingredients:

For the filling:

- 2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 2 tbsp milk powder
- 1 tbsp corn starch
- 1/4 cup sugar

For mango milkshake:

- 1.5 cup milk (full cream)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup mango puree
- Other ingredients:
- 4 slice bread
- 1/2 cup chopped mango
- Few sliced pistachios
- Few saffron threads
- Desiccated coconut

Instructions:

Making filling:

- In a saucepan add milk, milk powder, corn starch, sugar, desiccated coconut and stir well to ensure there are no lumps and the mixture is of smooth consistency
- Turn on the flame and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on medium flame
- Keep stirring frequently during cooking to prevent mixture for sticking to bottom When paste thickens and turns creamy, remove from flame and set aside

For Mango Milkshake:

- To a blender jar add chopped mangoes, milk, ice cubes (optional) and sugar
- Blend to a smooth and semi thick consistency.

Assemble the rolls:

- Trim away sides and roll the bread slices with a rolling pin
- Roll the edges thinner than the center
- Spread a tablespoon of filling uniformly over the slice
- Top with a tablespoon of chopped mango pieces.
- Roll tightly to make a cylinder. Prepare remaining three slices in the same manner
- Immerse the prepared rolls into the mango milkshake
- The entire roll should be soaked in mango milk shake for the best result
- Take it out immediately and place onto a serving plate
- Garnish with saffron threads and pistachios slices
- Top with a sprinkle of desiccated coconut
- Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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

World Bank predicts Gulf economies to grow 2.8 percent in 2024

The World Bank attributed Kuwait's robust economic performance to its expansive public financial policies, increasing oil production, and the successful full-scale operation of the Al-Zour refinery, which has a daily refining capacity of 615 thousand barrels.

The World Bank foresees Kuwait's economic growth rebounding to 2.8% in 2024, crediting expansive public financial policies, rising oil production, and the successful full-scale operation of the Al-Zour refinery, boasting a daily refining capacity of 615 thousand barrels.

In its report, the World Bank expected oil production in Kuwait to grow by 3.6 percent. Additionally, it forecasted a 2.1 percent growth in the non-oil sector for this year.

The bank mentioned that relatively high interest rates could constrain domestic consumption, thus hindering Kuwait's economic activity from reaching its full potential.

Moreover, continued political uncertainty may delay the implementation of new infrastructure projects and slow the pace of reform initiatives.

On the other hand, the World Bank report suggests a recovery in economic growth in the Gulf, reaching 2.8 percent in 2024 and 4.7 percent in 2025. This optimism stems from "regional prospects and the expected recovery in production." This includes not only oil, especially since OPEC+ is gradually liberalizing production

quotas in the second half of 2024, but also the strong momentum of the non-oil economy, which is expected to continue expanding at a robust pace in the medium term. In this regard, the World Bank finds that Gulf countries' commitment to diversifying their economies highlights their strategic approach to enhancing resilience and achieving sustainable development during a period of global economic fluctuations.

Saudi Arabia: Regarding growth rates in the Gulf, the World Bank expects Saudi Arabia's real GDP to grow by 2.5 percent in 2024, driven primarily by strong non-oil private sector activities.

Forecasts indicate a growth of 4.8 percent, with the end of the period of voluntary cuts in oil production in the second quarter of 2024, and an expected gradual increase in production during the second half of 2024.

UAE: It is expected that the UAE's real GDP growth will accelerate to 3.9 percent in 2024, driven by OPEC+'s announcement of a significant increase in oil production in the second half of 2024 and the recovery of global economic activity.



The growth rate of oil production is expected to reach 5.8 percent in 2024, provided that non-oil output remains strong and continues to support economic growth, increasing by 3.2 percent. This growth is driven by the strong performance of the tourism, real estate, construction, transportation, and manufacturing sectors.

Qatar: Regarding Qatar, the World Bank expects real GDP growth to rise marginally in 2024, but it will remain at a modest level of 2.1 percent, with the non-oil sector growing strongly at 2.4 percent, driven by the growth of

the tourism sector.

Bahrain: It was stated that Bahrain's economic prospects depend on the future trends of the oil market and the acceleration of the pace of implementation of structural reforms. Estimates indicate that the growth rate will rise to 3.5 percent in 2024 with an increase in oil production, while the non-oil sector will remain the main engine of growth.

It was stated that Bahrain's economic prospects depend on the future trends of the oil market and the acceleration of the pace of implementation of structural reforms.

Estimates indicate that the growth rate will rise to 3.5 percent in 2024 with an increase in oil production, while the non-oil sector will remain the main engine of growth.

Additionally, the economic prospects for the Sultanate of Oman remain positive, with real growth expected to reach 1.5 percent in 2024, driven by increased gas production and efforts to diversify economic activity, especially through further improvements in the business environment.

US Embassy hosts Kuwaiti alumni of US colleges

Embassy of the United States hosted a vibrant reception and networking event at the Radisson Blu Hotel to honor distinguished and active Kuwaiti alumni who have studied in the United States. More than one hundred Kuwaiti alumni attended the reception to celebrate the enduring educational exchange between Kuwait and the United States.

US Ambassador H.E. Karen Sasahara, underscored the profound historical ties between Kuwait and the United States, emphasizing the pivotal role that educational exchange plays in strengthening bilateral relations over the past six decades. She highlighted that five generations of Kuwaitis pursued their academic endeavors in the United States, contributing to the deepening of understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

Ambassador Sasahara remarked, "As



someone from Boston, a city known for its rich academic heritage, I am proud to witness the transformative impact of educational exchange. Boston epitomizes the spirit of learning and critical thinking that defines the

US education model. By fostering a robust network of alumni, we aim to facilitate ongoing collaboration and exchange between Kuwait and the United States, thereby contributing to mutual prosperity and understanding."



The event provided a platform for Kuwaiti alumni to share their enriching experiences studying in the United States. Moreover, it enhances further engagement within the local business community and the Embassy.

KCC unveils vision, targets, activities of club

Kuwait Cricket Club (KCC) General Assembly, held in association with the Public Authority of Sport, concluded on 22 May at the Radisson Blu Hotel. In his address to the gathering, KCC President Haider Farman gave a comprehensive report on KCC's vision, objectives, targets, ongoing activities, national teams, new infrastructure, funding, and the anti corruption initiatives being carried out in close coordination with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Farman sincerely appreciated the efforts of all the board members, partners, sponsors along with the executive management of KCC across all departments, organizing committee members and the entire coaching staff for their untiring efforts and contributions with the national players towards the development of the game of cricket in Kuwait.

KCC Board General Secretary Emad Al Jassam, Vice President Faisal Al Marzouk, Board Members Mahmoud Bastaki and Awatif Al Qallaf, Director General Sajid Mohammad Ashraf and Advisor to the KCC Board, Asad Khan, participated in the General Assembly.

Mahmoud Abdullah, former manager of



the Kuwait National Men's team, and PR & Marketing Consultant of KCC, Faisal Al Obaid were also in attendance along with Kuwaiti Nationals Captain, Fahad Bastaki, Mohammad Habib, head of Government & Legal Affairs, and Ali in charge of National & Social Media.

Senior KCC members Qasim Ali (National Head Coach & Development Manager), Melwyn Serrao (Head of Domestic), Saud Qamar (Public Relations & HPC), Husnain Arshad (National Women's Team Manager), Tahir Khan (Head Coach Juniors), Jude D'Sylva (Coach Juniors Cricket), Nikhil Kulkarni (Head Coach Women's),



Ali Talib (National Juniors Team Manager), Tariq Rasool Shah (U19 Girls Head Coach), Mehboob Khan Pathan (Facilities Management), Kashif Shareef (Coach Juniors) and Nasser Imrban (Logistics Manager), were also present on the occasion.

A statement issued on the occasion said that the KCC is progressing at a rapid pace in all its key areas of development and as a fraternity it looks forward to continue to bring all the various segments of the society and the communities residing in Kuwait together for the promotion of the game of cricket in Kuwait.

Meteorologist expert warns of record high temperatures in Kuwait

Meteorological expert Issa Ramadan stated that the current temperatures in the country are four to five degrees Celsius higher than usual.

Ramadan explained that this extreme heat wave is due to the Indian seasonal depression's influence on the region, coupled with hot winds blowing dryly through northern Kuwait's valleys and desert areas from Iraq. These factors have significantly increased temperatures, with Ramadan attributing the abnormal heat waves to global climate changes and the impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

He likened the current situation to weather conditions experienced in the autumn of 1997 and the summer of 1998, noting that El Niño tends to increase heat waves during summers following unusually heavy winter and spring rains.

Also, heatwaves are arriving earlier than in past summer months due to the Indian seasonal depression.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Europe Can Get the Green Deal Done



Simone Tagliapietra

A senior fellow at the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, is an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna.

Since the European Green Deal was introduced in 2019, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has touted it as the European Union's new economic-growth agenda. After all, while the strategy's core objective is climate-related — to reduce the EU's greenhouse-gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 — it aims to achieve that by modernizing the economy and fostering innovation. But not everyone is convinced.

In recent months, European drivers have complained about the EU's looming ban on the production and sale of cars with internal combustion engines, households have resisted plans to phase out gas boilers, and farmers have revolted against environmental regulations they view as overbearing. With the approach of next month's European Parliament elections, far-right parties are jostling to establish themselves as the official standard-bearers of this growing discontent and preparing to use any power they win to sabotage the green agenda.

The protesters make some legitimate points. The radical transformation that the European Green Deal entails raises difficult questions

about who should bear the costs of climate action, both within and among countries. If those costs end up falling disproportionately on ordinary workers, let alone the poorest and most vulnerable communities, the transformation will exacerbate inequality, with potentially serious social and political knock-on effects. Fortunately, properly designed climate policies can avert that outcome and actually lead to greater social equality.

The European Green Deal has accounted for climate-justice considerations since the beginning. Advocates always knew that they would need to secure the political support of coal-intensive Poland, and they had not

forgotten the 'yellow vest' revolt that erupted in France in 2018, after President Emmanuel Macron attempted to introduce a carbon tax in road transport.

It is no coincidence that the first flagship initiative under the European Green Deal was the Just Transition Fund, which will dedicate €20 billion (\$21.6 billion) in 2021-27 to support the 'economic diversification and reconversion' of the territories expected

to be the most negatively affected by the green transition. Nor is it a coincidence that, while creating the first-ever carbon market for buildings and road transport, the European Commission established the Social Climate Fund, which is expected to mobilize at least €86.7 billion between 2026 and 2032 to compensate the most vulnerable groups for higher energy prices.

These policy initiatives reflect the advice one would find in the economic literature on carbon dividends. But they will prove insufficient to offset the profound distributional effects of climate policy, particularly as decarbonization accelerates and includes sectors that directly

carbon-market revenues to support the uptake of green alternatives, from electric vehicles to home heating systems. And it should push for a 'Rural Green Deal' that supports small farmers while requiring the agri-food industry to transform its systems. While such EU-level action would not eliminate the distributional consequences of climate policy, it would help significantly.

The EU must also turn decarbonization into a real economic opportunity by developing a solid green industrial policy. This will require, first and foremost, revitalizing the 'boring' EU single-market agenda, in order to leverage the bloc's greatest asset — a huge shared market for goods, financial services, energy, workers, and ideas — to incentivize new investments in clean tech.

Interventions in specific technology areas will also be needed. Rather than mimic the broad-based US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU should make the most of its limited resources by delivering targeted support in areas where it already has a solid comparative advantage on which to build. While some incumbent industries might need support as they decarbonize, supporting breakthrough innovations should be the primary goal.

The European Green Deal has come a long way since it was conceived five years ago. But if the EU is to achieve its 2030 climate goals and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, it must act now to ensure that it can weather the inevitable political headwinds. A new green social contract and industrial policy can make all the difference.

“ Rather than mimic the broad-based US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU should make the most of its limited resources by delivering targeted support in areas where it already has a solid comparative advantage on which to build. ”





Albania

Unveiling the hidden jewel of the Adriatic Sea

Nestled in the Balkans, Albania is a country teeming with natural beauty, rich history, and diverse culture, making it an ideal destination for adventure seekers, history buffs, and nature lovers alike.

- **Albania, nestled in the Balkans, offers a unique and unforgettable travel experience, from its stunning coastline to its majestic mountains and captivating cities.**
- **Spring through summer, from April to September, provides the most pleasant weather for discovering Albania's natural wonders and engaging in outdoor activities.**
- **Kuwaiti citizens holding Article 17 passports do not require a visa to enter Albania. Starting June 13 this year, Jazeera Airways will launch direct flights to Tirana, Albania's capital**

Some of Albania's treasures that needs to be visited during a trip to this enchanting country include:

Albanian Riviera: Stretching along the Ionian Sea from Vlore to Saranda, the Albanian Riviera is home to some of the most beautiful beaches, including Dirmi Beach, Galley Beach, and Casmil Beach, known for their turquoise waters and soft white sands. Enjoy swimming, diving, boat trips, or simply relaxing on the sun-kissed shores.

Albanian Alps: Experience exhilarating hikes, challenging climbs, and adventurous camping excursions amidst the breathtaking peaks of the Albanian Alps, part of the Dinaric Alps range. Explore hidden caves and uncover the wonders of this mountainous paradise.

Berat: Step back in time as you explore Berat, the 'City of a Thousand Windows';



With its captivating blend of natural beauty, historical treasures, and cultural richness, along with its expanding tourism infrastructure, the country is on track to become a sought-after destination in the years to come.

a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its Ottoman-era architecture and enchanting old town. Marvel at the medieval Berat Castle, traditional Ottoman houses, and ancient mosques.

Gjirokastra: Explore Gjirokastra, known as the Stone City, where ancient stone buildings line the streets. Visit the



imposing Gjirokastra Castle, one of the largest in Albania, and immerse yourself in the region's traditional way of life at the Ethnographic Museum.

Tirana: Immerse yourself in the vibrant energy of Tirana, Albania's capital and largest city. Explore Skanderbeg Square, admire the Pyramid (formerly the Enver Hoxha Museum), and delve into the nation's history at the National History Museum.

Butrint: Discover the secrets of Butrint, an archaeological site near the Greek border and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Marvel at the remnants of Greek and Roman civilizations, including an ancient theater, Roman baths, and weathered temples.



Shkodra: Venture into Shkodra, one of Europe's oldest cities, situated near Lake Shkodra. Ascend Rozafa Castle for panoramic views of the city and lake, and embark on a journey through time at the Mesi Bridge, the oldest stone bridge in the Balkans.

To fully embrace Albania's rich cultural heritage and



experience Albania's authentic traditions firsthand explore the rural villages and engage with the warm and welcoming locals. Immerse yourself in vibrant festivals such as the traditional Vëra Festival and the Bera Music Festival.

When you tire of sight-seeing, delight your taste buds with Albania's diverse cuisine, featuring delectable dishes like Tavë Kosi (lamb with yogurt), Byrek (stuffed pastries), and Fli (traditional crepes). Indulge in traditional Albanian sweets like Baklava and Kadaif, flaky pastries filled with nuts and drenched in honey syrup, offering some of the sweetest choices available.

From its stunning coastline to its majestic mountains and captivating cities, Albania offers a unique and unforgettable travel experience. To make this experience more accessible, Jazeera Airways is all set to launch direct flights to Tirana, Albania's capital.

Kuwaitis holding Article 17 passports do not require a visa to enter Albania. For residents of Kuwait who do not hold a valid long-term Schengen or UK visa and have used it, they can still obtain an Albanian visa by visiting www.e-visa.al, create an account, and select 'electronic visa.' Then, choose 'Type C' and 'visa for tourism.'

If you plan to visit shortly, remember spring through summer, from April to September, provides the most pleasant weather for discovering Albania's natural wonders and engaging in outdoor activities. Language-wise, although Albanian serves as the official language, English and Italian are commonly spoken in tourist hotspots. The Albanian Lek (ALL) serves as the local currency. While credit cards are widely accepted in major cities, it is advisable to carry some cash for smaller transactions.



Albania, the undiscovered gem along the Adriatic coast, calls out to travelers with its captivating blend of natural beauty, historical treasures, and cultural richness. Whether you are drawn to sun-kissed beaches, exhilarating mountain adventures, or cultural immersion, Albania guarantees an unforgettable and authentic travel experience.

With its expanding tourism infrastructure and improving services, Albania is on track to becoming a sought-after destination in the years to come. So, start your Albanian adventure today and uncover the enchantment that awaits.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Building Resilience in the Developing World



Erik Berglöv

Chief Economist at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund notes in passing that the economic impact of COVID-19 on emerging and developing economies has been much more severe than previously thought. While GDP growth rates in the developed world have returned to their pre-pandemic trends, those of developing countries are even lower.

The economic scars of COVID-19 across the developing world, particularly large debt overhangs and insufficient investment in future growth, will remain visible for decades. And as environmental disasters become increasingly frequent and more severe, the pandemic might be a harbinger of future shocks. COVID-19 is not the last or the most virulent virus the world will face.

After all, pandemics are far from the only environmental threat disproportionately



affecting low-income countries. Climate change and biodiversity loss, together with antimicrobial resistance, air pollution, and lead poisoning, among others, all have the potential to act as significant drags on developing economies' growth.

To be sure, emerging and developing economies are still growing faster than their more developed counterparts. Over the past

three decades, developing countries' share of global economic growth has nearly doubled to over 70 percent, but as extreme weather events, epidemics, and other natural disasters become more frequent, this may change. To prevent the gap between rich and poor countries from growing, we require a deeper understanding of developing economies' unique vulnerabilities, as well as more effective strategies to build resilience.

COVID-19 is a case in point. Despite the massive death toll, developed countries have been able to leverage their substantial fiscal and monetary resources, along with their access to vaccines, to minimize the pandemic's long-term economic impact. By contrast, the damage to emerging and developing countries has been more severe and is expected to last much longer than initially anticipated, reversing decades of progress and undermining their ability to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The financial risks associated with climate change can be both acute, triggered by extreme events such as storms and floods, and chronic, resulting from long-term shifts in weather patterns. Damage to physical assets, supply-chain disruptions, and reduced output pose significant threats to economic growth and development, especially in countries with mounting debt burdens and limited resources.

These risks inevitably affect the cost of capital. Ideally, capital should flow 'downhill' from capital-rich to capital-poor countries, where the potential social returns are higher. Since the 2008 global financial crisis, however, capital has tended to flow uphill, largely owing to perceived risks and weak institutions in emerging and developing countries, as well as developed economies' monetary policies. The growing threat posed by pandemics and climate change are reinforcing these trends.

This is happening despite steady improvements in macroeconomic policies across the developing world. A recent paper by Piroska Nagy Mohácsi and others suggests that in terms of transparency and accountability, central banks in developing countries have even surpassed the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank. During the 2008 crisis, and again during the pandemic, developing countries' central banks closely followed the policies of the Fed and ECB. But their post-pandemic inflation forecasts have been more accurate, enabling them to respond faster to price increases.

While these improvements have not significantly reduced the cost of capital, they may help address another, related problem. Most infrastructure investments needed to mitigate future pandemics and

environmental shocks rely on technologies that are financed in dollars, yen, and euros but that generate revenues in local currencies. Improved macroeconomic management could make developing countries' currencies more attractive, reducing currency mismatches.

Climate adaptation and resilience efforts are more difficult to finance than mitigation measures, as developing countries often lack the necessary revenue streams to secure contracts. The newly created Pandemic Fund could help bridge some financing gaps by facilitating investments in pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. But the Fund is not large enough to support the necessary climate adaptation and biodiversity restoration projects, underscoring the need for additional financing mechanisms.

Collective investments in resilience are particularly crucial for poor people who cannot afford personal protective measures like generators, air purifiers, air conditioners, and floodwalls. Using the case of mangroves in Indonesia, a recent study by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank shows that these trees protect economically vulnerable communities from tidal waves. But poor people are more likely to deplete mangroves as they use them for firewood and building materials and live in areas where local authorities have less capacity to maintain these vital ecosystems.

To build resilience, emerging and developing economies must also attract private and institutional capital. This requires the creation of markets that can accurately assess the value of lower carbon footprints and the impact of climate change. Multilateral development banks, in particular, can play a vital role in certifying such assessments. They also help in managing risks, mobilizing private investment, stabilizing capital flows, and creating new tools

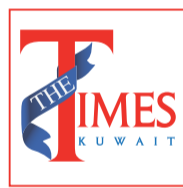
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”

for evaluating investments in adaptation and resilience.

Developing economies are already facing much tighter environmental constraints, with a limited global carbon budget and commitments to reverse biodiversity loss, than countries that achieved high-income status in the past. Strengthening resilience to future pandemics and environmental shocks will be crucial to preventing lower growth in emerging and developing economies, and thereby maintaining overall global growth.



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Safe disposal of medication protects people, environment



Safely disposing of unwanted medication is vital to prevent their accidental use, or misuse by people. Discarded drugs can also harm the environment and pollute water resources. Some drugs can be very dangerous, or even fatal, for people who are not meant to take them, especially children and pets may be at risk of coming into contact with improperly stored or disposed of drugs.

A survey conducted several years back among pharmacists working in hospitals and polyclinics in Kuwait examined how they disposed of unwanted medications (UM) returned to them by the public. The survey also assessed the awareness of pharmacists about the impact of improper disposal on the environment, and whether they would agree to have their pharmacies as collection points for future take-back programs.

The survey found that the majority (73%) of pharmacists polled discarded returned medication by dropping them in the trash, while only 16 percent of respondents disposed of UMs according to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health (MoH). In addition, around 82 percent of respondents said they were aware that improper disposal causes damage to the environment and 88 percent of the pharmacists also agreed that government hospital pharmacies and polyclinics should serve as collection points for any take-back program.

On a related note, in 2022, the Healthy Cities Office of the Ministry of Health organized a campaign to evaluate the effectiveness of a 'take-back' campaign in promoting medication safety in Kuwait. The campaign also aimed to educate the public about the risks and hazards associated with storing expired and unused medications at home, emphasizing the potential for medication errors and drug-related harm from these products.

The campaign, which lasted over a period of one month, successfully engaged 405 households and collected 1005 kg of medication, comprising 7,648 items. An evaluation of the returned products revealed that painkillers comprised the largest group (18%) among the returned medications. This was followed by gastrointestinal drugs (12%), antibiotics and other anti-infective drugs (11%) and vitamins and dietary supplements (10%).

Over half of the items returned during this campaign, 4,395 (57% of the total), originated from the Ministry of Health and 3,253 (43%) came from the private sector. The campaign found that 52 percent of items had expired, 24 were used but not expired, and 21 percent were unused but not expired. No information was available for 3 percent of the items

Currently, the Ministry of Health in Kuwait lacks a dedicated collection service for the proper disposal of household medication. The campaign sought to provide a safe and controlled mechanism for the disposal of unused and expired drugs, through secure collection points at primary health care (PHC) centers on designated

collection days. The take-back campaign also served as a platform to raise public awareness about safely disposing unwanted medication, and the urgent need for the MoH to implement a 'take back' service

In many countries there are proper guidelines on how to safely dispose of medications, including pills, syringes, and inhalers. The best way to dispose of most medications is to take them back to an official drug take-back facility if available.

Properly disposing of used or unused needles and syringes helps prevent others from getting cuts or punctures. People can dispose of needles and syringes at home by placing used ones immediately into disposal containers meant for needles and other sharp objects (Sharps disposal containers are available in some pharmacies and healthcare centers).

Check with local trash removal services or healthcare facilities to find out what services are available to dispose of such containers. People can also flush certain dangerous drugs down the toilet to limit the risk of someone else using them or a pet consuming them.

Health experts and organizations involved in drug safety recommends immediately flushing away unused or expired medications with the following words in their names: benzhydrocodone, buprenorphine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, meperidine, hydromorphone, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone sodium oxybate, tapentadol.

They point out that the potential risk from these medications, some of which can be fatal if improperly used, outweigh the potential impact of flushing them away on the environment. Moreover, considerably more amounts of drug waste reaches the environment through waste water supplies, when medicines pass through the body and enter the waterways through urine, feces and other human expellations.

In particular, used and unused fentanyl patches should be flushed immediately. Fentanyl patches, which are strong pain relievers administered through the skin, can harm anyone who has not received a prescription to use them. A significant amount of the drug remains in a patch after use, so it could harm anyone who picks it up by accident. The medication usually comes with instructions on flushing used and surplus patches safely.

Keep in mind the following tips when throwing away unused medication:

- Remove the medication from its packaging
- If possible, mix UM with any substance such as dirt, cat litter, or coffee grounds to deter children and animals from picking them up
- Take care not to crush any tablets or capsules
- Recycle the empty bottle or other packaging, taking care to obscure or remove any personal information first.

Genetics could help predict high BP risk

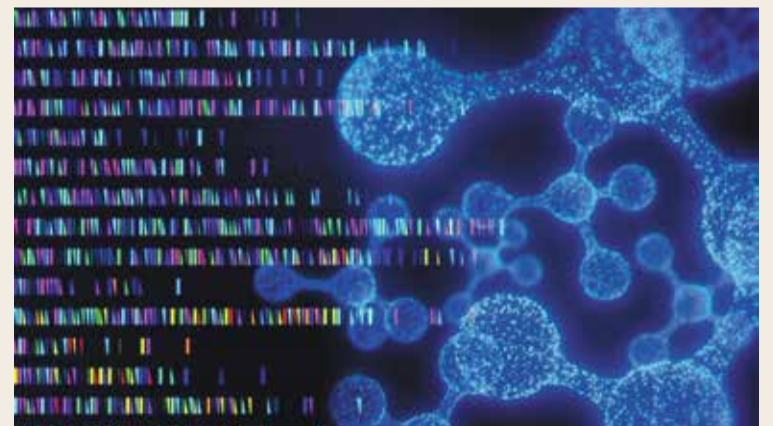
Studies estimate that one in every three adults around the world has high blood pressure (BP), also known as hypertension. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) high blood pressure is responsible for 7.6 million deaths every year, or around 13 percent of total deaths around the world. Around 54 percent of stroke and 47 percent of coronary heart disease are attributable to high BP.

While certain unmodifiable risk factors, such as age, ethnicity, and some existing health conditions can increase a person's potential for developing hypertension, there are also a number of lifestyle changes — including losing weight, eating healthy, lowering salt intake, exercising, and not smoking — that can help reduce that risk.

Early detection, adequate treatment, and good control of high blood pressure can lower the risk of complications associated with hypertension. However, early detection of BP is difficult as high blood pressure does not cause any visible symptoms. Currently early diagnosis of high BP is limited to undergoing a screening for hypertension.

Now, researchers from Queen Mary University of London in the United Kingdom say that genetic signals could help doctors identify those at risk of developing high blood pressure early on in their lives.

For their study, researchers analyzed genetic data on more than one million individuals from the UK Biobank, the International Consortium for Blood Pressure, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' Million Veteran Program, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center's biorepository.



The study identified 113 novel regions of the human genome, also known as genomic loci. They also found more than 2,000 independent genetic signals for blood pressure across all loci. They noted that although many genetic variants within the same 'locus' — a specifically defined region on a chromosome — will be similar, their study found many examples of 'loci,' which contain multiple, independent, distinct 'signals'. Blood pressure is a highly polygenic trait, meaning that it is influenced by thousands of different genetic variants, and each of these genetic variants will only have a small effect on increasing or decreasing blood pressure levels. However, if all the effects of all associated genetic variants are combined into one single aggregated risk score, which the researchers called a polygenic risk score, it could indicate larger effects on blood pressure.

A polygenic risk score essentially gives each person a score, according to how many risk variants they carry. Knowing someone's genetic risk score would enable a doctor to know if the patient was in the high genetic risk group.

By using polygenic risk scores, scientists said they found that study participants with the highest genetic risk for hypertension have mean systolic blood pressure levels that are about 17 millimeters of mercury (mmHg) higher than those with the lowest genetic risk. The highest genetic risk group also has a seven-times likelihood of developing high blood pressure compared to those with the lowest genetic risk.

A main benefit in knowing genetic risk is that our genes are fixed at birth, so the genetic risk score is the same fixed value throughout life. Calculating people's genetic risk scores before middle-age, when generally other lifestyle risks tend to increase, doctors would be able to target patients at higher genetic risk and recommend earlier lifestyle or therapeutic interventions.

Early detection could help reduce blood pressure before it begins to impact health, and thereby lessen the risk of cardiovascular disease in future. Researchers believe that more knowledge about how genetics impact a person's blood pressure will ultimately help predict those at risk of high blood pressure in the future



Egypt's new gem The Waldorf Astoria

Where opulence meets exclusivity

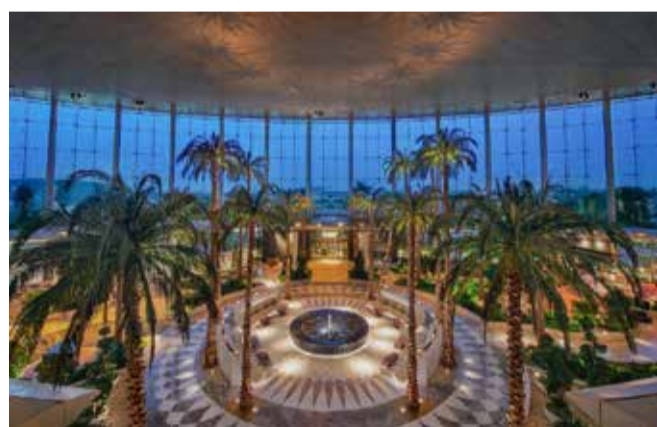
The Times Kuwait Report

When it comes to travel, there is nothing quite like the indulgence of a luxury hotel stay to pamper your senses. From the moment you step into the grand lobby to the exquisite dining experiences and plush accommodations, The Waldorf Astoria in Cairo not only promises but delivers an experience to treasure.

Nestled in the heart of Cairo's bustling Heliopolis district, the Waldorf Astoria Heliopolis stands as a beacon of luxury and refinement. This iconic hotel has reaffirmed its status as a premier destination for discerning travelers seeking an unparalleled hospitality experience in Egypt. Offering guests both sophistication and pampering Waldorf Heliopolis goes beyond the exceptional while living up to its legacy of excellence.

The Waldorf Heliopolis experience starts from the moment you land at Cairo Airport where one begins to experience the friendly and fast arrangements all the way to the hotel. Upon entering the grandeur hotel the stunning lobby captures the essence of the rich cultural heritage of Egypt with contemporary elegance. The lobby itself is unusual and chic with natural light making the welcome both grand and intimate.

Guests can be awed by the soaring glass-walled atrium lobby curved into the shape of the eye of the Pharaonic god, Ra. Taking center stage is the iconic Waldorf Astoria clock — a signature feature of Waldorf Astoria hotels across the globe — which



displays the time within two rings of flowing water, inspired by the River Nile and Pharaonic architecture.

It is hard not to feel impressed by the natural beauty of the lobby with plants and trees beautifully spaced out that tradition and modernity blend so seamlessly into this picturesque ambience.

Renowned for its timeless luxury the Hilton's Waldorf brand's first ever hotel not only in Egypt but the whole African continent shows that Egypt is fast becoming one of the most sought after destinations in the world.

Inspired by the ancient Egyptian references and the Art Deco era the interiors of this amazing property evokes a deep sense of Cairo's rich cultural heritage. Offering unparalleled luxury in the ancient city of Heliopolis, the hotel's modern elegance with local authenticity adds to the allure of this vibrant city.

The sense of calmness and serenity continues into the guest bedrooms. Believed to provide strength and power, the white and blue lotus are often found within ancient Egyptian decorations and have been subtly incorporated into the design and artwork of the beautifully appointed rooms and suites.

Waldorf Heliopolis has spared no expense in ensuring comfort in their rooms; from high-thread count linen and designer toiletries, hand painted ceramics, plush velvet fabrics and marble mosaic tiles to the locally inspired artwork and intricately detailed rugs, each design element has been meticulously curated to reflect the cultural history of Egypt whilst providing a comfortable and luxurious haven.

General Manager Dale MacPhee, who had the distinct honor of overseeing the opening of this masterpiece property and a veteran in the hospitality industry told The Times Kuwait in an exclusive chat that even the smallest of details have been looked into closely to ensure the ultimate comfort of the guest. She noted that while the hotel is an amazing property, it is the hotel employees that give guests an experience they will cherish, and so the hotel went through an elaborate process of



General Manager
Dale MacPhee



selecting the best team.

MacPhee's efforts were firmly endorsed as we witnessed one of the most personalized and tailor made stay's that has left a lasting impression of perfect hospitality. Bringing together all the elements of a perfect stay and creating a symphony of luxury the hotel has positioned itself as a sanctuary of opulence.

Dining at the Waldorf Astoria Cairo Heliopolis is a journey through global flavors, with on-site restaurants serving a variety of international cuisine. Whether it is a casual meal or a fine dining affair, each dish is crafted with the freshest ingredients and utmost care.

The variety of exceptional dining options goes over and beyond culinary excellence. The hotel's signature restaurant, Brasserie Ayda serves an eclectic 'Mediterranean-without-Borders' menu. Showcasing the very best of Mediterranean and France and using fresh seasonal ingredients the restaurant can truly be a dining delight.

Dining at the Waldorf was an ode to gastronomy with each course a revelation that danced on the taste buds. With stylish



interiors designed to resemble a Mediterranean garden, the open kitchen, vibrant bar and pretty terrace offer a buzzing energy from breakfast right through to dinner and into the night, with lively music and entertainment.

The Peacock Alley, a signature lounge found at Waldorf Astoria properties around the world, serves as an ideal venue for both sophisticated and informal gatherings where guests can enjoy specialty Arabic coffee and artisanal pastries, or delight in afternoon tea and expertly crafted cocktails with Egyptian mezze dishes.

Those looking to soak up the sun and lounge by the pool can enjoy lighter fare and refreshing treats at Le Jardin Pool Bar. With a secret garden ambience, guests can choose from Mediterranean fusion dishes alongside refreshing cocktails.

The other exceptional amenities at the hotel include the Spa designed to provide a holistic and rejuvenating experience to guests. The Fitness center which has some top-notch cardio and strength training equipment, and the Sauna and Steam rooms that provide guests with perfect relaxation.

Into our second day of stay at the hotel our experiences just kept getting better. The attentive and friendly staff and the personalized concierge were quick to anticipate our 'wow us' on many occasions including knowing our preferences and tastes. Personalized pillows and hand towels were inscribed making us feel more at home. Our experience at the Waldorf Astoria Cairo Heliopolis endorsed our view that luxury hotels are not just about marble floors and gilded walls, they are about creating moments that linger in your soul long after you have checked out. Whether it is the scent of fresh flowers or the warmth of a genuine smile, these experiences become part of your personal story.

