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OPEC optimistic on higher prices for 2017

The decision by OPEC, the 13-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, in late November 2016 to pare production after an 8-year hiatus helped to immediately push up international oil prices. By early January 2017, oil was trading at around US\$54 per barrel, more than double of what it was selling for a year earlier, when it hovered at \$26 per barrel.

In a last ditch attempt to reduce global crude stock and deplete surplus oil inventory, OPEC members agreed at their November meeting to cut output

Mexico also agreed to cut production by 558,000 barrels per day in 2017.

Kuwait, which has been elected to chair a Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee that will strictly monitor adherence of members to the agreement, reported in mid-February that its evaluation of member states' output cuts revealed there was general compliance with the agreement.

Kuwait's Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouk, who heads the committee, said in a recent statement to the media that "OPEC compliance with the output cuts is excellent ... Compliance

according to their commitments," the oil minister said. He added, "OPEC is urging oil suppliers outside the group to fulfill their commitments to cut output, and crude prices will rise once producers demonstrate better compliance with their agreement to clear the global glut."

Despite this general compliance and optimism on depleting the global oil glut, several factors could force OPEC members, especially Saudi Arabia and other GCC states to make significantly more production cuts than they had earlier signed up for. For one, though Iran has been exempted from the cuts and is not in a position to surge its production, the actual amount it exports could hinge on political rather than economic calculations. Another factor is that the two other OPEC members, Libya and Nigeria, who are exempted from production cuts, have already ramped up their production. The return of crude supplies from these two countries has meant that OPEC's total November 2016 production figure of 33.87 mb/d was higher than the October reference level by 150,000 barrels per day. Any increase in this discrepancy over the coming months will not auger well for the accord.

In addition, reports from the United States show that since oil prices approached \$50 per barrel, rigs have begun popping up at a rapid rate in US oil fields. By December, 65 previously idled oil rigs in the US were back online, bringing the total oil rig count there up to 525 — the highest in over a year. This includes US shale producers who had built a backlog of partially completed wells in anticipation of a price recovery, and have been steadily switching

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Defense spending in GCC moves from defensive to offensive

Ongoing regional conflicts in Yemen and the fight against the Daesh in Syria and Iraq, as well as Iran's nuclear deal signed in 2015, which frees the country to import defense equipment by 2020, has led to a splurge in armament purchases

by the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. However, unlike previous military spending, what makes recent purchases more telling is the emphasis on offensive rather than just defensive weapons.

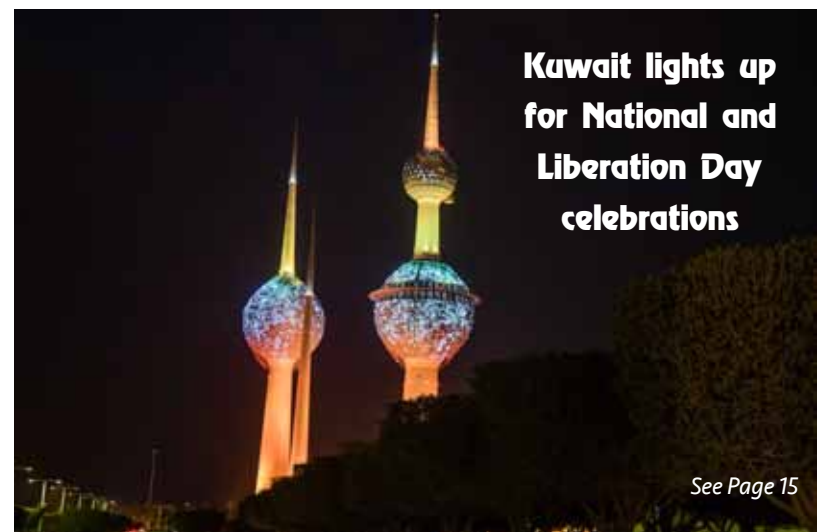
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by 1.2 million barrels per day (mb/d) to 32.5 mb/d for a period of six months, starting in January 2017. All members of OPEC, with the exception of Iran, Libya and Nigeria, as well as Indonesia, which has since then suspended its membership in the organization, are mandated to trim their output by 4.5 percent, using October 2016 production of 33.7 mb/d as a reference level. Meanwhile, 11 non-OPEC oil producing countries headed by Russia and including Kazakhstan, Oman and

has reached 92 percent." He added that non-OPEC members had also delivered on more than half of their promised production cuts. "At the time when producers signed the deal, the initial commitments were to gradually increase cuts until April and May, so we were expecting to see some producers not fulfilling the 100 percent cuts immediately," Al-Marzooq noted.

"We understand the circumstances, and in February we are talking to non-OPEC producers to raise their cuts



Kuwait lights up for National and Liberation Day celebrations

See Page 15

Kuwait's reputation smeared by actions of few companies

Kuwait has repeatedly been felicitated and lauded in international circles and in the media for its compassion towards the poor and its humane acts in support of those suffering from both natural and man-made calamities. In 2014, the country was designated as an 'International Humanitarian Center' by the United Nations General Assembly.



In a statement released on the occasion of Kuwait being designated an International Humanitarian Center, the UN Secretary General's Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs, Dr.



Abdullah Matouq Al-Matouq noted: Kuwait's government and people built on the humanitarian and charitable work their ancestors had initiated, offering the world a role model for humanitarian work, with no



discrimination whatsoever regarding religion, ethnicity, language, or geography. This bright image Kuwait offers has qualified the country for a leading humanitarian status.

Most recently, the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was in Kuwait to express the organization's appreciation for Kuwait's humanitarian role around the globe. Speaking on the occasion, the Director-General William Lacy Swing praised Kuwait's contribution to improving the lives of displaced,

immigrants and refugees around the world. He added, "Kuwait has always been a source of hope for those suffering from crises."

It is a matter of pride that Kuwait's numerous monetary and non-monetary contributions in support of those suffering around the world should be recognized and appreciated by the international community. This makes it all the more disconcerting when Kuwait's significant role in providing international assistance and its good standing among the global community is corroded by

the shameful activities of just a few hundred individuals and a handful of companies.

Exploitation of domestic workers, misuse of the sponsorship system, visa trading and repeated instances of non-payment of salaries to workers by some employers, including a few reputed large firms, have been widely described, closely examined and extensively discussed in local, regional and international circles. Unfortunately, when news of such human rights violations is reported, it is usually the name of the country that is mentioned, not that of the individual companies or people involved.

In August of last year, Saudi Oger, a leading construction firm in Saudi Arabia owned by the family of billionaire and former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, laid-off several thousand employees without paying their salaries for months. However, when the issue hit the headlines, it was the reputation of Saudi Arabia that got tarnished, not that of Saudi Oger.

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Rwanda - Africa's mini-Singapore in the making

Rwanda has the distinction of often being labeled the 'Singapore of Africa'. With its clean streets, intolerance to corruption and an impressive economic growth that has consistently been around 8 percent annually, land-locked Rwanda is working its way to mimicking some of the successes of the tiny island-nation of Singapore.

In 2008, Singapore and Rwanda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide a framework for public sector collaboration. The same year, the Rwanda Workforce Development Authority (WDA) was formed to empower citizens with practical skills required to build the country's economy. The WDA was modeled on the highly successful Singapore Workforce Development Agency, which played a significant role in transforming Singapore into an economic powerhouse after the devastations of Second World War.

It was also in 2008 that Singaporean

Chong Fook Yen, a vocational and technical education expert, landed in Rwanda's capital Kigali. He was given charge of Rwanda's WDA and tasked with transforming the African country's vocational and educational system with a focus on pre-employment training.

Back then, Rwanda was slowly recovering from its turbulent history — in the genocide of 1994, close to a million Rwandans were killed along racial lines in a little over 100 days. If you look at Singapore when we first started our nation building, we too had sort of just stepped out from the Second World War and were also facing racial riots back then, although not on the scale of what was experienced in Rwanda, notes Mr. Chong.

In 2008, the skill-gap among the Rwandan population was huge and we had to work out a curriculum to the match the needs of the country's industry, revamp the vocational system and upgrade the skills of the



instructors. Students were also sent to Singapore to hone their skills in areas like hospitality and aviation, adds Mr. Chong.

Due to the efforts of WDA, as well as continued support from government policies, today there are 392 vocational training schools across Rwanda offering a wide range of courses for students.

"If we don't invest in education, just one generation would destroy the country," points out Mr. Chong, "because that generation would grow up without the right education, without the right character-building, and the repercussions would trickle down to the next generation and the next." Since those early years, Rwanda has

made huge strides in its growth and development, as it slowly transformed into one of Africa's fastest growing economies. The country's GDP has more than quadrupled since 1994 to reach US\$1,784 in 2015. It has one of the lowest levels of corruption in African and, in 2016, was ranked the second best country to do business on the continent by the Global Entrepreneurship Index. As of January 2017, Rwanda also has the highest percentage of women in parliament at 63.8 percent and is only one of two countries with a female majority in parliament, the other being Bolivia in South America with 53.1 percent female representation.

Rwanda president Paul Kagame is clearly pleased with how his country has emulated Singapore and her successes. "When they say this is the Singapore of Africa, I think maybe it's a recognition that Rwanda has learnt a thing or two from Singapore and has applied it and seen its transformation," he recently said.



Somalia's new president faces bumpy road ahead

Somalia's newly elected president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, popularly called Farmaajo, faces a daunting task ahead as he tries to put together the first fully functioning central government in a country torn apart by nearly a quarter-century of bringing together a country torn apart by political strife and a protracted militant insurgency.

A former prime minister, diplomat, professor and politician, who holds dual Somali-US citizenship, Mr. Mohamed named the new leader after two rounds of voting on 8 February and immediately took the oath of office.

In a new hope for election results in Africa, the incumbent President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud conceded defeat. "History was made, we have taken this path to democracy, and now I want to congratulate Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo," said the former president as he stepped down.

Fears of attacks by the militant group al-Shabab meant that elections could not be conducted across the country and so it was limited to the country's legislators, who voted at a heavily-guarded former air force base in the capital, Mogadishu. The voting process began after 14,000 elders and prominent regional figures choosing 275 members of parliament and 54 senators, who in turn chose whether to back President Mohamud for a second term or one of 21 rivals. It was a huge change from the elections in 2012 when just 135 elders picked the MPs, who chose the president.

Youth employment critical as population rises across Africa

Africa's youth population is projected to double from the current 480 million to 840 million by 2050. Unless employment opportunities are created for them, this rapidly growing youthful population could give rise to serious social, economic, political and security challenges.

The urgency among policymakers to tackle youth employment in Africa was underlined at the meeting last week in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, of ministers in charge of finance, youth, employment and education of the Central Africa Region.

The ministers and officials from Cameroon, Madagascar, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo attended the meeting in Yaoundé

on 7 February to discuss the African Development Bank's (AfDB) 'Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy', which was adopted in May 2016.

The high-level meeting aimed to improve policies, strategies, programs and projects focused on youth employment and entrepreneurship in the region. The conference also helped create synergies between the AfDB and government officials, the private sector, youth organizations, development partners, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders.

In his welcoming address, the AfDB's Resident Representative in Cameroon, Racine Kane, reiterated the Bank's commitment to finding resolution to this ever-important issue of youth unemployment and adopting a coordinated approach through their 'Jobs for Youth in Africa



Strategy'. Over 200 participants attended the high-level event. The 'Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy' was presented during the meeting and participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with its flagship programs. Panelists explored possibilities for sustainable solutions to the youth unemployment crisis, its medium- and long-term impacts and the creation of a better business

climate that will lead to decent jobs for youth.

In his opening remarks, Louis Paul Motaze, the Cameroonian Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, recognized the importance of youth issues and that "unemployment exposes youth to many perils", impacting "their talent, and jeopardizing the country's economy and stability."

Mining deals in Africa to be more transparent

Despite being the fountainhead for much of the continent's corruption, natural resources have for ages been the core of many African economies. And, notwithstanding market volatility and the recent slump in global commodity prices, natural resources are likely to continue representing a significant growth opportunity for countries in Africa in the future.

Underlining the importance of natural resources in sustaining economies, representatives at the Mining Indaba conference, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa on 6 - 9 February, were strident in calling for reforms and the need for a more transparent approach in mining deals.

Mining Indaba, the world's largest mining investment conference and the largest mining event in Africa, saw the African Development Bank (AfDB) take the leadership role in helping African governments ink better deals at the negotiating table. In addition to the Bank representatives, a two-hour session at the conference attracted private sector and government representatives. Led by the African Natural Resources Center (ANRC) the session identified some of the key challenges and opportunities of supporting negotiation amongst



the various stakeholders, such as private sector, civil society organizations, development partners and regional institutions.

A diverse mix of delegates, from the private-sector, representatives from governments, civil society organizations, and regional bodies across Africa and beyond, were unified in their call for greater transparency in negotiations over mining projects and strong endorsement for the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) Compact. The AMV Compact was launched at last year's Mining Indaba, where it received early support from the Mining Industry Association of Southern Africa (Miasa).

The compact was designed to close existing gaps between mining communities, the private sector and governments and comprises of a set of 12 principles designed to offer improved value and benefits to all parties involved.

All 54 African Union member States had adopted the AMV Compact, which ensures that mining activities contributed to economic transformation and benefited all African citizens. However, successful implementation of the compact relies on buy-in from the private sector and other key stakeholders in Africa, at both regional and country levels.

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, who was guest of honor at the special session, said the AMV Compact was important to the continent and it was crucial that its aims were realized. He noted that the compact encouraged cooperation by emphasizing the business benefits the private sector would derive from the AMV Compact's implementation at national and regional levels. The compact, he said, paves the way for sustainable use of mineral resources and good governance with cooperation and collaboration of the private sector.



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Restoring Faith in Globalization

**Carl Bildt**

Former prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden

I must confess that I am a firm believer in the benefits of globalization. To my mind, the gradual interlinking of regions, countries, and people is the most profoundly positive development of our time.

But a populist has now assumed the United States presidency by campaigning on a platform of stark economic nationalism and protectionism. And in many countries, public discourse is dominated by talk of globalization's alleged 'losers', and the perceived need for new policies to stem the rise of populist discontent.

When I was born, the world's population was 2.5 billion. I vividly recall a time in my life when many people feared that starvation would soon run rampant, gaps between the rich and poor would grow ever wider, and everything would eventually come crashing down.

We now live in a world with 7.5 billion people, and yet the share of people living in absolute poverty has declined rapidly, while the gap between rich and poor countries has steadily closed. Around the world, average life expectancy has increased from 48 to 71 years — albeit with



significant differences between countries — and overall per capita income has grown by 500 percent.

Just looking back at the last 25 years, one could argue that humanity has had its best quarter-century ever. Since 1990, the share of people living in extreme poverty in the developing world has fallen from 47 percent to 14 percent, and child mortality, a critical indicator, has been halved. The world has never seen anything like this before.

A similarly bright picture emerges from other indicators. Fewer people are dying on battlefields than

during previous periods for which we have data; and, at least until a few years ago, the share of people living under more or less representative governments was gradually increasing.

This spectacular progress has been driven partly by advances in science and technology. But it owes at least as much to increased economic interaction through trade and investment, and to the overarching liberal order that has enabled these positive developments. In short, globalization has been the single most important force behind decades of progress.

These days, trade is often wrongly blamed for shuttering factories and displacing workers in developed countries. But, in reality, the disappearance of older industries stems primarily from new technologies that have improved productivity and expanded the wealth of our societies. Likewise, rising inequality, real or imagined, has far more to do with technology than with trade.

To be sure, there are not as many farmers today as in past decades or centuries; Lancashire's cotton mills, Pittsburgh's steel plants, and Duisburg's coal mines have closed; and there are far fewer workers in Northern Sweden's vast forests. The children of those employed in these industries now often head for the lights of rapidly expanding cities, where they fill jobs that could scarcely have been imagined just a few decades ago.

For most people around the world, life before globalization was poor, brutal, and short. And yet today's anti-globalists have turned nostalgia into a rallying cry. They want to make America — or Russia, or Islam — 'great again'. Each may be rallying against the others; but all are rallying against globalization.

Economic conditions were certainly less favorable in the years following the 2008 financial crisis, but now employment and economic growth are rebounding pretty much everywhere. Real (inflation-adjusted) GDP has been rising for 15 consecutive quarters in the eurozone, and all European Union economies are expected to grow in the next few years. Meanwhile, the US economy is already doing

well — unemployment is below 5 percent and real incomes are rising.

Of course, many societies are undeniably experiencing a growing sense of cultural insecurity, not least because many people have been led to believe that external forces such as migration are eroding traditional sources of peace and stability. They are told that a return to tribalism in one form or another is a readily available coping mechanism. Their mythical tribe was great in some mythical past, so why not try to recreate it?

Such thinking poses a serious threat to the world's most vulnerable people. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to eliminate extreme poverty worldwide by 2030 is entirely dependent on continued economic growth through trade, technological innovation, and international cooperation. Erecting trade barriers, engaging in digital mercantilism, and generally undermining the liberal world order will severely harm the extreme poor in Africa and other underdeveloped regions, while doing nothing to help coal miners in West Virginia.

The strong will always manage, but the weak will bear the burden of a nostalgic protectionism that erodes the benefits of globalization. At the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping was the one extolling the virtues of globalization, while many Western business leaders wandered the halls trying to sound concerned for the supposed losers of the process.

The communists are keeping the globalization faith; but the capitalists seem to have lost theirs. This is bizarre and entirely out of sync with past performance and current facts. We have every reason to be confident in a process that has delivered more prosperity to more people than anyone could have dreamed of just a few decades ago. We must not be shy in defending globalization and combating reactionary nostalgia.

We can have a brighter future — but only if we do not seek it in the past.

“

Since 1990, the share of people living in extreme poverty in the developing world has fallen from 47 percent to 14 percent, and child mortality, a critical indicator, has been halved.

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The Fight for Ocean Health



José María Figueres, Pascal Lamy, and John D. Podesta

The ocean is changing, and not for the better. Well-established scientific evidence shows that it is becoming emptier, warmer, and more acidic, putting marine life under serious pressure. But there is good news: evidence also indicates that the ocean can regenerate, and the world has already agreed to enable that outcome.

The Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean (SDG 14) was adopted by world leaders in September 2015 as part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It includes vital targets, such as mitigating ocean acidification, securing habitat and species protections, reducing pollution substantially, and ending illegal fishing and subsidies that lead to overfishing.

Ultimately, SDG 14 promises to preserve the ocean and ensure its sustainable use in the future. But it can be realized only with bold and urgent action, buttressed by solidarity among governments, citizens, and business.

This week, governments and experts are gathering in New York to begin crafting a global 'call for action' to implement SDG 14. The call, which will be launched in June, at the UN's first-ever Ocean Conference, should include a firm commitment to protect at least 30 percent of the ocean by 2030, and ensure that the remaining 70 percent is sustainably managed. UN member states must also pledge to secure the extension of legal protections to high-seas biodiversity by closing the gaping governance loophole that exposes the ocean to plunder.

There is one more priority area that the call for action must address: climate change. In fact, a healthy ocean will be impossible to secure without also addressing this pressing global challenge. Achieving SDG 14 therefore demands that the international community reaffirm its commitment to the Paris climate agreement, and to announce concrete steps toward achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To avoid more empty promises, all commitments must be backed up by a clear financing plan and subjected to regular accountability checks. Governments, the UN, and other actors should set a schedule for monitoring and check-ins, to keep delivery of the targets transparent, funded, and on schedule. To support these efforts, we urge UN Secretary-General António Guterres to appoint a Special Representative for the Ocean, tasked with improving ocean governance and ensuring that the full potential of SDG 14 is realized. Such a representative must be given sufficient resources to do the job.

The ocean has suffered decades of abuse and neglect. It has been treated as a free-for-all garbage bin and race-to-the-bottom buffet. We



have financed its destruction, with no regard for the consequences. But those consequences have become impossible to ignore. While we, as previous global ocean commissioners, had to campaign hard in 2014 for the ocean to have its own dedicated global goal, it is now hard to believe that the ocean's position in the SDGs was ever in question. That is the sense that we should have in 2030, when the targets of SDG 14 are fully met. The only way to get there is through concerted effort — and not just by the likes of ocean commissioners. People everywhere must stand up and demand real action to ensure the ocean's regeneration. In short, the ocean must become everyone's business.

To kick-start that process, we have joined the Ocean Unite network, which is galvanizing conservationists, business leaders, young people, and activists to take advantage of growing interest in these issues and create coalitions that can drive ocean health to the top of political and economic agendas worldwide.

Such efforts are already having an impact, with citizens mobilizing to defend the ocean and policymakers beginning to respond to their calls. Now, it is the business community's turn to step up. Business has a clear interest in reversing the decline in ocean health.

The GDP derived from the ocean amounts to \$2.5 trillion, or 5 percent of the world's total GDP. That is equivalent to the GDP of the world's seventh-largest economy. The ocean is also the world's biggest employer, directly supporting the livelihoods of more than three billion people, and is a source of food for over 2.6 billion. Restoring the ocean thus amounts to an unparalleled business opportunity.

But the ocean's value goes far beyond economics. It provides half of the air we breathe,

governs our weather, and helps to support peace and prosperity. The ocean's future is the world's future. At a time when politics threatens to undermine cooperative action on the environment, fighting for our shared global environment is more important than ever.

Our responsibility for the ocean's health is as deep, fundamental, and permanent as our dependence on it. No political consideration can compete with that. Now is the time for all of us

— citizens, business, and government — to unite and fight for our ocean.

José María Figueres, former President of Costa Rica, is Co-Chair of the Global Ocean Commission. Pascal Lamy, a former director-general of the World Trade Organization, is a Global Ocean Commissioner. John D. Podesta, Chief of Staff to President Bill Clinton from 1998 to 2001, is the founder of the Center for American Progress.

OPEC optimistic on higher prices for 2017

Continued from Page 1

on this 'production-in-waiting' along with rising oil prices. Crude production in the US in early January 2017 was around 8.97 mb/d; analysts believe that other high-cost producers outside OPEC will also further ramp up production if crude prices rise above \$55 a barrel.

The silver lining in the current scenario is that the International Energy Agency (IEA) has revised its global oil demand forecast for 2017. The agency now estimates that growth will now be to the tune of 100,000 barrels per day higher and reach 1.3 mb/d in 2017, mainly on the back of better than expected demand in the US and revisions in Chinese and Russian data.

The IEA believes that taken together — compliance by OPEC and non-OPEC members to production cuts, and the relatively upswing in global demand — global crude inventory could swing to a deficit of around 0.6 mb/d in the first-

half of 2017. However, this assumption is based on the hope that both OPEC and non-OPEC members continue to adhere to their individual production cut quotas, and that US shale production does not resurface with even greater force to once again upset the supply-demand equation.

If global oil prices continue to rise in the coming months, then at their next meeting in June, OPEC can afford to pat themselves on the back for a job well-done and for demonstrating that the organization still has the teeth to shape markets.

However, should cracks appear in the alliance's compliance, and oil once again begins to seep into the market, then, the unenviable task of maintaining overall production cuts will most probably fall on Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies. Under those circumstances, whether the GCC countries will be willing to shoulder that burden could determine how oil prices flow in the months

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Tempura Anything



Tempura (the word refers to both the cooking method and the finished dish) is a wonderful frying technique that adds flavor and texture to food without competing with its natural flavor. Raw vegetables or seafood are dunked in a simple batter and then briefly fried in a mild-flavored oil, just long enough for the batter to crisp and the food to cook through.

As a technique, tempura is straightforward, and it also adapts well to various ingredients. Here are some tips to help you become incredibly proficient.

couple of inches on top to allow for splatters and bubbling. You will also need a mesh skimmer, called a spider, to lift the tempura out of the oil.

Add the oil: Use a mild vegetable oil with a high smoke point, such as canola or safflower oil. Canola oil is preferred because it is virtually tasteless. Be sure the pot is completely dry before adding the oil; water causes hot oil to splatter. If you plan to reuse the oil after frying tempura, let the oil cool completely and then strain it and store in a cool, dark place. Used oil turns rancid more quickly than fresh oil, so check it before using it again.

Heat the oil to between 176° and 182°C and monitor it periodically to maintain a constant temperature. If the temperature drops too much, the batter will absorb too



Search out vegetables and top-quality seafood: Vegetables with assertive flavors and a low water content work best for tempura. You can try bell peppers, eggplant, green beans, and summer squashes like zucchini. You can also dip fresh basil leaves in tempura batter (one side only) for a pretty garnish to a platter of summer vegetables. Other great candidates for tempura include carrots, sweet potatoes, and celery root. Sweet onions and fresh shiitake mushrooms are also wonderful.

In the seafood department, try shrimp and calamari tempura-style. Their firmness and their clean, iodine-free taste make them worth the expense.

Reduce into bite-size pieces: Cut the vegetables to sizes and shapes that let them cook at the same rate as the batter. Large vegetables should be cut into slices, thin strips, or chunks; smaller, quick-cooking items such as green beans and shiitake mushrooms can be left whole. It isn't necessary to dredge the ingredients in flour because my tempura batter clings well enough without it. But do make sure the vegetables and seafood are dry, and season the seafood with salt and pepper just before dipping it in the batter.

Set up your fry station: Use a large, deep cooking vessel and an accurate frying thermometer to monitor the oil. The pot should be made of heavy-gauge metal—cast iron or enameled iron are ideal because they retain heat so well. Use a pot at least eight inches deep so you can fill it with three to four inches of oil and still have a

much oil and you will get a ghastly result: greasy tempura. If the oil is too hot, the batter will brown before the food is cooked through.

Make the batter: Traditional tempura batter consists of just three ingredients: egg yolks, ice water, and flour.

The yolks provide richness and flavor, and the flour gives structure. But the batter is tricky to use—it must be extremely undermixed to prevent gluten development, which would make the tempura tough, and it must be used within twenty minutes.

Dunk in batter, lay in hot oil, and fry until crisp and golden: With a mesh skimmer, transfer the tempura to a papertowel-lined plate; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Continue dipping more pieces in the batter (stirring between rounds) and frying. Skim off batter particles from the oil as necessary.

Fry the tempura in small batches: Frying just four to six pieces at a time helps keep the oil temperature from dropping suddenly and gives each piece enough space to cook. If the pieces float toward each other, separate them with a firm nudge from your mesh skimmer.

Tantalize with seasonings: Sprinkle salt, pepper, and any other spices on the tempura as soon as they come out of the oil so the seasonings stick. Since the delicate coating doesn't last much longer than a few minutes, serve each batch of tempura right away. The traditional way to serve the tempura is with a dipping sauce of soy sauce.



Starbucks launches first Reserve coffee bar in the region

Coffee aficionados in the country have yet another reason to cheer. Starbucks, the global coffeehouse chain, has just opened their very first Reserve coffee bar in the entire Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) region, in downtown Kuwait. It is 18 years since Starbucks opened their first outlet in Kuwait, and again the first in the MENA region. Since then the brand has grown in popularity, drawing a steady stream of citizens and residents eager to experience and enjoy coffee made from some of the world's finest whole bean coffees.

Now, Starbucks has taken the fine-coffee enjoying experience to a whole new level with the opening of the Reserve coffee bar. Located in the heart of Kuwait's bustling business district in Sharq, the new Starbucks Reserve coffee bar is on the ground floor of the Crystal Tower along Ahmad Al-Jabbar Street.

What makes Starbucks Reserve coffee bar special is that it features the company's rare, small-lot Reserve coffees that are offered in limited quantities. This unique coffee is sourced from selected coffee growing regions in Latin America, Africa and the Asia Pacific islands, is roasted exclusively at the brand's eponymous Seattle Roastery in the United States. It is then shipped directly to only around 20 percent of the more than 25,000 Starbucks outlets worldwide. Kuwait happily is one of those branches.

The Reserve coffee bar is quite different from your average drive through coffee outlet, or even the standard Starbucks store where you go for a quick perk up shot, on the way to or from work. This is place where you can relax, wind down all

your stress and take time out to enjoy a truly immersive coffee experience.

Tellingly, the new Reserve bar venue provides a befitting relaxing ambiance with tastefully designed airy interiors and a décor that beautifully contrasts the warm wood paneling and muted gray walls, with the stark industrial ceiling with its exposed ductwork and suspended globe lights. However, the



pièce de résistance of the place is the three-sided coffee bar with its black marble top and yellow-birch colored sides, which stretches along one side of the store and encloses the area where the certified Coffee Master baristas take center stage.

Seated at the coffee bar, one can observe these coffee specialists as they go about preparing delightful coffee concoctions. These Coffee Masters have earned their title as an acknowledgement of the special training they have undergone at Starbucks, the knowledge they have about coffee and the skill they have gained in consistently brewing excellent coffee.

The Coffee Masters, of whom



there are less than 5,000 in the entire Starbucks chain, readily engage with customers at the bar, detailing the various nuances of coffee flavors, the terroir of beans and the different brewing methods used. What marks the professionalism of these coffee artists is that while they are explaining about the virtues of the coffee they are also simultaneously crafting the exquisite coffee that you are about to savor.

Commenting on the store opening, Graeme Gardiner, Senior Operations Manager - Starbucks Kuwait said: "We are extremely proud to introduce this special store that showcases our passion for coffee in this region."

With an immersive and sensory coffee bar, the new store defines a new opportunity bringing customers closer to their coffee, and to Starbucks, more than ever before."

Three special Reserve coffees are currently on offer at the store — Nicaragua El Suyatal, Brazil Bourbon Rio Verde and Colombia Andino. The store also offers Starbucks core range of food and beverages that are known and loved by customers in Kuwait.



GCC aims to introduce simultaneous VAT adoption in January 2018

Despite administrative and technical obstacles, policy makers in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are committed to introducing a 5 percent value-added tax (VAT) at the start of next year. This was disclosed by Younis al-Khouri, under-secretary at the UAE finance ministry during a recent media interview.

The GCC, its finances strained by low oil prices, has long planned to adopt the tax in 2018 as a way to increase non-oil revenues, but



economists and officials in some countries have said privately that simultaneous introduction in all countries may not be feasible because of the complexities behind creating

the administrative infrastructure to collect the tax and the difficulty of training companies to comply with it.

Asked whether some sectors in the UAE might be exempt from the tax

to reduce the drag on the economy, Al-Khouri said the government was aiming for a 5 percent rate across the board but parts of seven sectors – education, healthcare, renewable energy, water, space, transport and technology – might get special treatment.

He added that the government expected around US\$3.3 billion of revenue from the tax in its first year. That would be about 0.9 percent of the UAE's gross domestic product of \$371 billion in 2015.

From the start, authorities will seek to register all companies with annual revenues exceeding \$100,000 for the tax, and anticipates that 95 percent or more of companies will comply in the initial stage.

Revenues from the tax may increase gradually with economic growth but the government is not at present considering any increase of the tax above 5 percent, and would not raise it in the future without a thorough study of the economic and social impact, Khouri said.

BAIA presents The Nutcracker Ballet



More than 100 young dancers of The British Academy of International Arts (BAIA) presented back-to-back performances of Tchaikovsky's renowned ballet, The Nutcracker.

Alongside the ballet, popular fairytales given a modern adaptation were rendered through the form of tap, contemporary, jazz and modern dances at the spectacular Dance Gala held on Saturday, 4 February.

Extraordinary, graceful, and diverse dance moves, combined

with theatrical lighting, traditional and popular musical selections, lavish costumes and haunting images, created an unforgettable and heartfelt experience for all present. BAIA can be rightly proud of performing a full scale ballet and setting the artistic world alight in Kuwait.

For more information: http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_BAIA-wows-audiences-with-The-Nutcracker-Ballet



Rotana expects rising intra-regional travel to drive Kuwait's tourism growth

Unveiling its plans for future growth and market expansion in the GCC, Rotana, one of the leading hotel management companies in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe, said on 9 February that it expects the trend of intra-regional travel to pick up pace this year, bringing positive momentum to the hospitality industry in Kuwait and the wider region.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Rotana Hotels 2017 GCC Roadshow, Guy Hutchinson, Rotana's Chief Operating Officer, also said the tourism sector in Kuwait will benefit from continued government spending on infrastructure.

Rotana, which is currently in the midst of an aggressive regional expansion, is set to add a second property in Kuwait by 2020 with the opening of Centro. This will be the first Rotana hotel to open in the country



under the 'Centro by Rotana' brand – the company's lifestyle affordable hotel brand. Once complete, the new hotel will add 209 rooms to the company's existing inventory of 198 rooms in Kuwait, bringing the total tally to over 400 keys.

"Kuwait is witnessing a spurt in tourist arrivals from within the GCC – particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar

– thanks to the government's focus on developing the country's leisure and entertainment sector. Rotana is looking to tap into the opportunities thrown up by these trends by opening our first Centro hotel in Kuwait, which will cater to the demands of the new generation of travellers who seek both finesse and functionality at reasonable rates," said Mr. Hutchinson.



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Over KD500 million owed to domestic workers recovered by DWD in 2016

An official at the Domestic Workers Department (DWD) disclosed to local media that the department received 1,300 complaints in 2016, and recovered over KD500 million in salaries owed to domestic workers.

He further added that the department shut down 27 domestic labor recruitment offices in 2016, after repeated complaints against these offices. The DWD also referred 41 cases to the relevant courts following complaints related to non-payment of salaries, unlawful termination of

contract and dismissal.

He revealed that in 2016, the total number of campaigns in all governorates, led by Director of DWD Mohammed Al-Ajmi, reached 1,806, and about 2,100 domestic workers, who had sought refuge in their respective embassies, had been released.

Meanwhile, reliable sources at the labor department disclosed that nearly 70 percent of local companies do not stick to labor law and deliberately violate the rights of their workers, especially in relation to their vacation allowance and indemnity. A number of companies even force their workers to sign affidavits even before they are employed alleging they had



already received indemnity.

Some companies also circumvent the labor laws and decisions of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor by opening accounts for their workers in banks, and then hold the ATM cards so as to immediately withdraw the deposited salaries.

The same sources noted that in addition to denying employees their due indemnities, many companies attempt to cheat their workers of allowances for their annual leave, weekly holiday and official and religious holidays. They pointed to a remarkable increase in labor related cases in courts with some cases remaining entangled in courts for over seven years without any resolution.

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CRIME

Deportation for expats caught serving sheesha to juveniles

Three expatriates working at cafés have been arrested and referred to the authorities in preparation to deport them for serving sheesha to juveniles. The expatriates were arrested during a three-hour campaign which was launched by Farwaniya police. A security source said this campaign is the first of its kind which is being carried out in compliance with the decision issued by the Interior Ministry, which forbids serving sheesha to juveniles.

Maid harassed by motorist

A Kuwaiti citizen lodged a complaint at Abdullah Al-Mubarak Police Station against an unknown individual who harassed his Asian housemaid. According to security sources, the citizen went to the police station along with the housemaid and reported that his housemaid was walking on a road in Abdullah Al-Mubarak area when a vehicle pulled up next to her and the motorist started harassing her. The suspect eventually fled from the location when she requested help from passersby.

'Rambo' breaks cuffs, jumps police custody

As seen in the action movie Rambo, a Kuwaiti citizen broke his handcuffs and jumped from a moving patrol car after he was caught driving a stolen vehicle. A security source said patrolmen on a round of Jahra area saw the citizen driving a wanted vehicle and arrested him. They placed him in handcuffs and led him to the patrol car. It was then he resisted and caused injuries to the officers. On the way to the area police station, he broke the handcuffs and jumped from the patrol car. He sustained a broken leg and additional injuries in other parts of the body.

Fake doctor arrested for treating illegals

Personnel from the Criminal Investigations Department have arrested an unidentified Asian man for practicing medicine without license. Acting on a tip-off, police put the suspect's apartment in Khaitan under surveillance for quite some time. The man was caught red-handed with three of his patients. During the interrogation, he confessed to practicing medicine from the past five years inside his apartment. He said on a daily basis he received 10 patients, most of whom were violators of residence law. He also confessed to selling abortion pills for KD 50. Police have seized a quantity of forbidden medicines.

Individual arrested for attempting to smuggle drugs

An unidentified individual was arrested at Nuwaiseeb border checkpoint for attempting to smuggle 500 grams of hashish and narcotic pills by taping them to his left leg. According to sources, customs officers were inspecting travelers who arrived at Nuwaiseeb border checkpoint from a GCC country when they caught the suspect. During interrogations, the suspect revealed his intention to smuggle the illicit items into the country to sell them to his clients. He was arrested and referred to the Drugs Control General Department for necessary legal action.

Cop arrested for robbery

Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs at the Ministry of Interior Major-General Abdul Hamid Al-Awadhi has referred a policeman to the Public Prosecution for committing crimes — extortion and looting money — from pedestrians and motorists after duty hours. A security source said the suspect was caught in the act in Mahboula. He reportedly stopped one of the victims and attempted to blackmail him in a prelude to rob him. The source said the suspect has probably committed dozens of crimes, but has admitted to only seven. Detectives from the Criminal Investigations Department received information about the suspect and set a trap which led to the arrest.



TIYANA HRISTOVA

Bulgarian Pianist who knows no bounds in music

Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Pianist and Artist Tiyana Hristova left Bulgaria sixteen years ago and has been traveling around the world performing from private to large audiences rendering her repertoire of classic to contemporary pieces. Her popular performances have earned her respect and admiration from her audience wherever and whenever she has staged her recitals.

"I was five when I had my fingers running on the keys of my grandparents piano but my parents forbade me to play, it was then I told my father that I will travel the world and will become an admired artist. I was enrolled at an early age in a music school and at six years old I was given my first upright piano and still keep it till today," commented Hristova.

Hristova recalled that her first performance was with her brother, who is also a music artist, in a small hall and tickets were sold cheap. She played classical pieces from Brahms and sonata piece shared with her brother on one piano. No profits were raised but it was good exposure to the local audience in Bulgaria.

Her first international performance was in Austria, where she shared the limelight with a bass player and violinist.

Hristova graduated from the Bulgarian Academy of Music, Fine Arts and Dancing and Mozarteum University in Salzburg Austria.

She also works with a renowned musical director Mike Ricketts and performs at the British Embassy in Kuwait. Hristova has performed with other top artists in Kuwait in several prominent venues to name; Jumeirah Hotel, Al Hashim Grand Ballroom and Salwa Sabah Theater.

Hristova works closely with Foundation of Hope, which holds musical concert annually in Kuwait. The foundation highlights different artists during the concert.

She also works with a Turkish composer that fuses a traditional Turkish lute and piano, a combination of strings and keys played on separate hands. "It's very interesting and requires mastery of the lute, both hands are used separately," explained Hristova.

"It's not all about the piano, it's the music in general and the sentiments that go with it. Music for me is my way of expressing my innermost feelings, the words I cannot express are narrated through the music I play in the piano," commented Hristova.

She performs at the lobby of the Radisson Blu Hotel in Kuwait from 7 pm till 10:30 pm and showcases contemporary music to her audience.

Bhavans Kuwait celebrates its decennial annual day



Bhavans Kuwait celebrated its decennial annual day on 9 February at the school premises. The 10th annual day, themed 'Change', was honored by the presence of Rishiraj Singh



IPS, the Excise Commissioner (DGP) in the state of Kerala, India. The commissioner was welcomed by a guard of honor presented by the BSS (Bhavans Service Scheme) cadets.

Other dignitaries present at the event

included Ali Jediyan Al Rashidi, the sponsor and owner of Indian Educational School (IES) and Smart Indian School (SIS), N.K. Ramchandran Menon, the Chairman, Bhavans Middle East, his better half, Sudha Ramchandran, Krishnadas Menon, Director IES, T. Premkumar, the Principal, IES and Mahesh Iyer, the Principal, SIS.

More than 300 versatile Bhavanites from the primary, middle, and the senior wings of IES, as well as their counterparts from SIS presented a spectacular pageant onstage that delighted the audience. The chief guest, Rishiraj Singh IPS (DGP), in his address, appreciated the chosen theme of the annual day and congratulated the performers for their brilliance.

The prize distribution witnessed the proud display of Bhavan's whiz-kids and the child prodigies onstage to receive the prizes of excellence and accomplishment. The occasion also saw the release of the school magazine, 'Tejas', by the chief guest in the company of other dignitaries.

For more images visit: http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Bhavans-Kuwait-celebrates-its-decadal-annual-day



Large number of expat teachers planning to resign by mid-March

Ministry of Education has notified the Social Studies Inspection Unit at the Capital Educational Zone to terminate the services of two teachers who were appointed in 2013 such that their official last day on the job will be 7 July, according to sources from the education sector.

This information seems to come as a confirmation of a recent report published in Al-Seyassah newspaper under the title

'Ministry of Education Terminates Services of 600 Expatriates'. Relatively, the sources indicated that a large number of male and female expatriate teachers, majority of who are Jordanians and Egyptians, are planning for a mass resignation by mid-March.

They revealed that the Jordanian teachers are determined to resign since their current salaries are almost on par with what the Jordanian government pays the teachers.



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Transfer of medical licenses under new amendment



Minister of Health Dr. Jamal Al- Harbi has amended the condition of transferring licenses for medicine, dental and other applied medical professions for non-Kuwaitis in private sector. Doctors will now be required to obtain approval of concerned bodies before the transfer and after observing the one-year period upon leaving the first employer.

Dr. Al-Harbi added the transfer of license is allowed in case the contract between the employer and the employee is expired. He noted the afore-stated measures are intended for stabilizing private medical sector and improving its performance to the desired level expected.

VVPA releases 18th book by founder



Valaikuda Vanampadi Poets Association (VVPA) launched the book titled 'Towards the Peak-Part - II' by prominent poet Semponmari Ka. Sethu during a cultural program on 17 February.

Attending the large gathering at the National Library of Kuwait was the chief guest on the occasion the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sunil Jain, who was accompanied by many noteworthy special guests that included the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Kuwait H.E. Kaandeeban Bala; Malaysian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Ahmed Rozian Abd. Ghani ; National Library of Kuwait General Manager Kamel Al-Abdul Jalil and a host of other dignitaries, Tamil nationals and well-wishers.

Mr. Sethu, who is presently a resident of



Kuwait and works for Kuwait Airways, is the distinguished author of 18 books in the Tamil language. He is also the founder and president of Valaikuda Vanambadi Poets Association.

Among the many highlights of the colorful cultural showcase, were a traditional dance and entertaining musical concert.

ESF Middle School presents fascinating Goldilocks musical

The English School Fahaheel (ESF) Middle School last week presented an adaptation on Roald Dahl's Goldilocks and Three Bears. Parents and guests were entertained by this colorful musical based on the popular children's story. Katelyne De Kok, Mohd Shaikh and Maram Jahin led the talented cast.



Year 5 enjoy Victorian Day at BSK

The Year 5 students and staff members at The British School of Kuwait (BSK) traveled back in time to 1837 to experience what life was like at school for children living in Victorian era.

The Victorian Day came at the end of the children's history topic and was the perfect

way to immerse them in all aspects of Victorian schooling and provide them with a real life experience of what it would have been like for children during that era compared to now. Throughout the day and in the lead up to the event they brought together lots of ideas and applied many cross-curricular skills.

Kuwait's reputation smeared by actions of few companies

Continued from Page 1

'Tens of thousands stranded in Saudi Arabia without food, water or salaries for months', was how international media reported the news; there was hardly any mention of the company involved in the fiasco.

Qatar and UAE have also been in the news lately over mistreatment of workers involved in construction of infrastructure for such high-profile events as the 2020 World Expo in the UAE and the 2022 Football World Cup in Qatar. Humanitarian organizations and global media have accused these countries of indifference in stopping the abuse of workers. The firms involved in providing inadequate and unsanitary living conditions for the laborers, or not paying their salaries on time, are hardly mentioned in the disparaging reports filed by the media and global organizations.

Just last week, in Kuwait, a few hundred Indian employees allegedly representing the thousands of workers employed by Kharafi National, a leading infrastructure development company in Kuwait, arrived at the Indian embassy to vent their grievances about non-payment of salaries and poor living conditions.

The workers claimed they had not been paid monthly salaries for nearly six months and were living under unhygienic and desperate circumstances at their labor camp in Shuaiba Industrial Area. They appealed to the country's ambassador and other embassy staff for assistance in finding a solution to their dismal situation, and to help them obtain their long overdue salaries.

The workers complained of being stranded at the company's labor camps and living for weeks at a stretch without water, poor sanitation, intermittent electricity and no proper medical attention. They said that every month company representatives had assured them salaries, only to renege on the promises at the end of the month. The desperate workers said all they wanted was the salaries owed to them for their months of sweat and labor, and the right to return home safely.

These workers, many of whom could not afford to live without salaries for even a month, had been without access to any financial resources for months on end. Their desperation was compounded by the fact that not only were they unable to fend for themselves, but their families back home who depended on their monthly remittances for sustenance were undergoing untold suffering.

Sadly, once again, when news of workers stranded for months without salaries is published, it is the name of the country where

the event takes place that gets besmirched, not that of the individual companies involved.

The low oil prices in recent years, which have led to revenue loss, budget deficits and slower economic growth in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bloc, has resulted in the government delaying payments for some ongoing projects. While many companies were genuinely impacted by the slow-down, a few companies exploited the situation and introduced arbitrary salary cuts, delayed payments, or altogether stopped paying salaries to their employees.

With projects in abeyance, some companies even refused to renew the residency permits of their staff. This placed many employees without valid residence and in danger of falling afoul of the police and other authorities that have been authorized to arrest and deport illegal residents.

It is nothing less than shameful that companies should use their employees as scapegoats and withhold their salaries, in a bid to raise the issue in the public domain and thereby pressure the government to speed up payments for their ongoing projects. Rather than approach the country's courts and raise a case against their debtors, but thereby risk a fall-out and probably no future contracts from the government, these companies take the easy way out and appallingly use their employees to gain their ends.

Kuwait is a signatory to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICESCR commits the country to work towards granting economic, social and cultural rights to individuals, including labor rights and the rights to an adequate standard of living, without any discrimination.

It is inconceivable that Kuwait which is committed to upholding the lofty principles enshrined in the international documents, should allow some companies and individuals to brazenly trample these venerable covenants. Regrettably, labor rights have been willfully infringed in the past, and this will probably continue to happen again, unless the authorities step in and take a decisive stand against such companies and individuals who tarnish the country's good name through their disreputable actions.

[As we go to press, it is understood that the Indian embassy discussed the issue of non-payment of salaries with representatives of the company involved. The embassy has been assured in writing that the workers would begin receiving their payments in installments from next week - Ed]

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Many Kuwaitis seek medical privileges under false pretext

About 250,000 Kuwaiti male and female personnel visit the Medical Council annually to seek approval of specialized committees for medical retirement privileges or reduced working hours under the pretext of suffering from false ailments, reports a local media.

The personnel often complain of frivolous ailments and ask for treatments, such as plastic surgery for their nose, eyes or lips, which are in no way related to their jobs. He indicated the committees are forced to reject approximately three quarters of applicants.

Al Nahil International Clinic organizes medical camp at KISR



Al Nahil International Clinic conducted a free medical camp at KISR (Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research) on the 7 and 8 February.

Al Nahil Int'l Clinic, a branch of Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Group, is a fast growing medical service provider known for conducting free medical camps as part of their social commitment towards the betterment of health.

"We strongly uphold the message 'Health is Wealth', at each of our camp sites and ensure to educate people who arrive at our counters," stated Abdul Aziz, General Manager of Al Nahil Int'l Clinic.

Dr. Liansa Philips and Dr. Anu Dinesh said

that it was an enjoyable experience to be at KISR and meet the employees there during the medical camp. Close to 350 employees from the various operational arenas of KISR came in for the free checkups, and it was shocking realization that 40 percent were diabetic. Doctors advised those who participated on the importance of sparing some time for better health checks amidst their busy work schedule.

The team from Al Nahil Int'l, under the leadership of Abdul Aziz, comprised of nursing staff Manju and Betty, along with the marketing team Ms. Mona, Ms. Shahida A, and Ms. Lucia Williams, as well as Doctor's Liansa Philips and Anu Dinesan.

Konkani Film Festival to present award-winning film

The Goan Cultural Centre in association with T-Bush International Films and Konkani Community of Holy Family Cathedral will be organizing a Konkani Film Festival in Kuwait on 25 and 26 February at the American International School Auditorium, Maidan Hawally.

The line-up of movies will feature six popular Konkani films, including the National Award winning Konkani film 'Enemy?'

Directed by Dinesh Bhosle and produced by Durga Prasad, 'Enemy?' won the Best Konkani Film at the 2015 National Film Awards. The film also won best foreign language feature film award at the International Filmmaker Festival, Milan, Italy.

The film festival program is as follows:

25 February:

Big Ben at 10.30am
Nirmon at 3.00pm
Home Sweet Home - ii at 6.00pm

26 February

Enemy at 10.30am
Noxibacho Khell at 3.00pm
Nachom-la Kumpasar at 6.00pm

Gate-passes for the film festival may be picked up by contacting the following numbers: 99047401, 99874104, 99699514, 99384029, 50796693 and 99389473.

TSK organizes Annual Sports Day 2017



The Sunshine Kindergarten (TSK) in Salwa held its annual Sports Days last week for its Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children at Wembley, the sports arena belonging to the British School of Kuwait (BSK). The children took part in a medley of events and were accompanied by their parents and family members. The TSK sports events

included a relay race, obstacle course and a bat and beanbag race. There was also the tricycle challenge, which was full of tricky maneuvers and daring dashes to the finish line. The grand finale for each day was the parents' tug-o-war. TSK Principal, Miss Heather, expressed her appreciation to all the TSK parents and family members for their support and participation.



IIT-IIM Alumni Association celebrates annual picnic

IIT-IIM Alumni Association, Kuwait, celebrated their annual picnic on 10 February at AIRTEC Desert Camp in Wafra. The event, which was graced by the presence of the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sunil Jain and his wife Dr. Gargi Jain, was attended by a large gathering of association members and their families along with their invited guests.

A variety of activities such as kite flying, sports, quiz competitions, anthakshari, impromptu dancing, and other games were organized on the occasion. This year a new exciting event,



the 2-minute 'Lightening Chess' was conducted. The members settled for a grand finale of a game of Tambola or lotto. Ambassador Jain

addressed the gathering and congratulated the organizers and the winners, and wished the group a grand success in all their future events.

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Fahaheel Branch : Al Sidra Complex, Opp. Mosque, Mezzanine 1, Beside Souk Al-Sabah - Tel: 23923030/40

Jahra Branch : Al-Aqool Complex No.7, G.Floor, Near Gulf Mart & KFH - Tel: 24566462/63 - Fax: 24566867

Mahboula Branch : Block 3, Street No. 301, Bldg. No. 101, Al Raed Security Bldg. - Tel: 23727220/23717220

Jleeb Branch : Block 4, Street 4 - Tel: 24341367/68

Email: saleseitt@eicgroupkw.com



28 February



Red Bull 5Pics Kuwait: A creative photography platform for amateurs and professionals, Red Bull 5Pics Kuwait provides participants with an opportunity to express themselves through their photos. To participate, snap five photos from your phone or camera showing what you love about Kuwait. Photos can be of the following categories: landscape, portrait, panoramic, creative, and black and white. The last date for submission is 28 February. For more information and to submit your photos: Visit, www.redbull5pics.me

2 March



Aga-Boom: An international kids show, performed for millions of people in Las Vegas, New York, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Japan and now Kuwait. Aga-Boom will be held from 2 to 4 March, at the Salmiya Theatre, near Geant. For more details and to register: Email at info@agaboom.com or info@skillsent.com, or call, 22273773.

9 March



Comic Con Kuwait: The most popular pop-culture event in the world, Comic Con will be held from 9 to 11 March, at the Kuwait International Fairground, Street 1, Mubarak Al-Abdullah. The event is open to all. For more information and to book your tickets: Visit, www.comicconkuwait.com or call, 65566046

9 March

Dance for romance: Ahmadi Music Group will be organizing Dance for Romance at the private garden in Messila, at 8pm. The event will include outdoor live jazz, dinner and Dj. The Kuwait jazz collective will rock out with everything from Miles Davis to



Henry Mancini, all in aid of live music performance in Kuwait. Get a group of 10 friends for maximum fun and a big discount. For more information and to book your tickets: Visit, www.ahmadimusicgroup.com, or call, 66184192.

11 March

Bark in the Park: Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitat (K'S PATH) will be organizing Bark in the Park at KOC Ahmadi 2nd Avenue Garden, from 11am to 4pm. The event will include doggy competitions, fun prizes, great vendors and a dog parade. The registration fee is set at KD 5 for adults and free for children below the age of 2. For more information and to register: Email to info@kspath.org or call, 50015454.



First RBK Spring Fayre: The Royal Britannia Kindergarten will be hosting a Spring Fayre (spring fair) at its location in Al-Siddeeq, Block 4, Street 401, Hawalli Governorate, from 10am to 2pm. For more information: call, 98009696.

16 March

Kuwait coffee festival: With an aim to bring together Kuwait's Coffee Community to promote coffee excellence and enhance coffee culture, Kuwait coffee festival will be held at Al Shaheed Park, soor street, at 10pm. The event is free and open to all. For more information: visit, www.kuwaitcoffeefestival.com, or call, 99994792



'The Chicken Curry Project'

Shireen Passi Chopra, a budding author launched her new book titled, 'The Chicken Curry Project' on 11 February at the Corinthian Club and Resort in NIBM annexe in Pune, India. The celebrity guest for the red carpet event was Ms. Denise O'Brien, a renowned Hollywood film producer and international publicist.

The event witnessed a large gathering of prominent people and renowned members of the media. Through her own experiences and the amusing events that unfolded as her mother hunted all over the world to find 'Mr. Right' for her, Shireen's book, 'The Chicken Curry Project' describes the strange and comical process that parents in India undertake to find life partners for their sons and daughters.

Denise, who was also the official hostess of the event, was excited about the book and found it extremely entertaining. She is keen to adapt the book into a romantic comedy movie in the near future.

Shireen's new book is already growing in popularity among readers and gaining good reviews.

Kim Conrad, an award winning author from US, says, "'The Chicken Curry Project' is a delightful and eye-opening book about all the many escapades that go on to make sure parents' beloved children are married to the 'right' person! A fun and



charming read."

Jigna Shah, celebrity fashion designer, says, "The Chicken Curry Project is extremely funny and entertaining. The main characters and their amusing experiences are very descriptive. This book has the necessary 'chicken curry masala' to be made into a movie."

Sumana Mukherjee, Indian documentary filmmaker, says, "I loved the book! The Chicken Curry Project is a must read for every youth irrespective of gender. It shows the true hypocritical social norm that is fulfilled in a very light and subtle way. Love the approach of Shireen as a writer."

Punam Kashyup, Director of Education, Delhi Public School World

Foundation, says, "The Chicken Curry Project deserves kudos...praise... accolades for its lucid, flowing style, inimitable approach and genuineness. It has been written with purity and passion providing very interesting reading...has all ingredients of an enjoyable book...humor, wit, vivid portrayal of incidents...and quite an eye-opener for many."

The Chicken Curry Project is available on Amazon (Kindle) currently. For hard copies of the book, kindly contact : 66733927.

For more information about 'The Chicken Curry Project' visit : Facebook Fan Page <https://www.facebook.com/TheChickenCurryProject/>



KMCC Mega Medical Camp 'Spandanam 2017' helps thousands of poor expatriates

Kuwait Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KMCC) Medical wing organized a mega Medical Camp 'Spandanam 2017' at the Indian Integrated School that was graced by famous Indian Islamic scholar M.M. Akbar. The camp, held in celebration of the organization's 40th Anniversary, was attended by around 1,256 expatriates who were offered a range of free medical tests, including Ultra Sound Scan, ECG, Cholesterol, Sugar and Blood Pressure tests and BMI.

The organizers arranged specialists of various departments such as Cardiology, Nephrology, Oncology, Ophthalmology,

Dental, Pediatric, Gynecology and more to screen the patients. There was even a Pharmacy that distributed free medicines for all the patients. Breast

Cancer Tests were available to women patients above 35 years. The camp was wonderful and remarkable in its way of helping the Indian community.





Kuwait lights up for National and Liberation Day celebrations



It is the month of February and Kuwait is once again brilliantly lit up in anticipation of the National and Liberation Day celebrations. Government buildings, businesses and private residences are all festooned with thousands of colorful lights mostly

depicting the national flag. Large images of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince adorn the façades of many buildings in the city and suburbs. The Times Kuwait photographer caught the following eye-catching images while making a round of the city and its surroundings.



Defense spending in GCC moves from defensive to offensive

Continued from Page 1

Items such as precision air-to-ground missiles, advanced guidance systems and air-to-air refueling equipment that extend the range and duration that jets can fly without landing to refuel, have been high on the list of purchases made in recent months by Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies. The Gulf spending on military hardware also includes purchase of higher-end weapons systems, such as advanced naval frigates, attack helicopters, and defensive missile batteries. The GCC states, and Saudi Arabia in particular, are worried that a resurgent Iran unbridled by economic sanctions will seek to increase its influence over the region by boosting the strength and capabilities of its ailing military, and in the process upset the regional balance of power.

Figures released by the US State Department in 2016 showed that the United States sold \$33 billion worth of weapons to its Gulf allies since May of 2015.

Elaborating on the sales, the then State Department spokesman David Mckeby said, "Consistent with the commitments we made to our Gulf partners at the Camp David

Continued on Page 15 summit last May, we have made every effort to expedite sales." He added that in the eleven months since then, the State Department had helped with the export of everything from attack helicopters to ballistic missile defense systems to precision guided munitions to the six-nation GCC states.

In 2015, the US delivered 4,500 precision guided munitions to GCC states, Mckeby revealed, including 1,500 taken from the US military's own inventories. Precision munitions makers in the United States like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing and General Dynamics, have all benefitted from the uptick in overseas sales. Lockheed alone has already received \$18 million to bump its Hellfire missile production from 500 to 650 missiles per month.

The company has also quadrupled the production of Paveway II laser-guided bombs, a favorite of the Saudi Royal Air Force. According to leading defense industry information service HIS Jane's, "Traditionally, military capabilities in the region have been focused on territorial defense," but now Mideast states are increasingly acquiring equipment that will allow them to build "the kind of capabilities required to conduct operations beyond their borders."

Analysts at IHS say that military spending in the GCC, which had been in a decline since oil prices slumped in mid-2014, are expected to swell by 3 percent annually from 2018. The combined budgets of the six-nation bloc are projected to reach US\$180 billion a year by that time. In the region the biggest spender is Saudi Arabia, which last year had the fourth biggest defense budget in the world, only behind that of the US, China and India. The Kingdom's recent purchases of a fleet of Panavia Tornado ground-attack aircraft and 72 Eurofighter Typhoon jet fighters ordered

from BAE Systems are among the aircraft that could see upgrades in weapon systems that would allow them to project power over longer distances. The Kingdom is also planning to increase its defense spending by 6.7 percent to \$50.8 billion in 2017. Other Gulf states, which have already increased spending on missile-defense systems over the last five years in response to concerns about the threat from the Iran, are also likely to start spending heavily over the next two years, noted IHS.

Meanwhile, there have been faint, nevertheless audible, calls within GCC countries for a shift in defense spending and a new strategic approach to military capabilities, in order to protect the six-nation bloc from current and potential future threats. These voices have been urging the government to redirect some of its substantial financial resources, now being spent on acquiring foreign manufactured weaponry, towards creating an industrial base that can manufacture military hardware domestically.

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Brain abnormality accounts for irritation to certain sounds



Many of us may get irritated with certain innocuous sounds, such as someone repeatedly chewing loudly, tapping on tabletops, clicking their pens or popping the bubbles in plastic bubble-wraps. While these sounds are no doubt annoying, to people suffering from a condition called misophonia these same sounds could be utterly unbearable.

New research now suggests that brain abnormalities may explain why people with misophonia have such an intense hatred of specific sounds. For their study, researchers conducted brain scans of 20 people with misophonia and compared it with brain scans of 22 healthy people. They found that among those with the condition, brain scans showed an abnormality in their emotional control mechanism that puts their brains into overdrive when they hear trigger sounds.

The scans also revealed that brain activity in people with the disorder originates from a different connectivity pattern in the frontal lobe of their brain, which is linked to normally suppressing abnormal reaction to sounds. In addition, the researchers found that trigger sounds had physical effects, such as increased heart rate and sweating in people with misophonia.

The findings may eventually help scientists to find treatments for misophonia and prompt others to look for similar changes in the brain in other disorders associated with 'abnormal emotional reactions'. Researchers also hope that in future it would be possible to identify the brain signature of the trigger sounds and use it for treatments, such as through neuro-feedback, where people can self-regulate their reactions by looking at what kind of brain activity is being produced.

Math learned best when children move

It has long been known that children require individualized learning strategies. New research from the University of Copenhagen strengthens this view with the finding that children improve at math when instruction engages their bodies.

The Danish study investigated whether different types of math learning strategies changes the way children solves math problems. Results from the study underscore that many children improve at math when their bodies are engaged



during instruction, and that math instruction should be individualized.

According to the researchers, children learn more if they move and use the whole body to learn. "Compared to previous studies which demonstrated that intense physical activity could improve learning outcomes, we have been able to show that lower intensity activities are just

as effective, or even more effective, as long as movement is integrated into the topic at hand," added the team behind the study.

After just six weeks of the study, all of the children improved their scores in a standardized fifty question national test. Children whose instruction included whole body activity performed best.

Their performance improved by 7.6 percent, with nearly four more correct responses than the baseline, and twice as much improvement as the sedentary fine motor skills group.

When children were grouped according to pre study math performance, the results demonstrated that children with average and above average performance benefitted most from using the entire body in learning. Children who were not very good at math prior to the study received no particular benefit from the alternative instructional forms.

New school reforms often focus on the incorporation of physical activity during the school day, with the aim of improving motivation, well-being and learning of all children. However, individual understanding must be taken into account. Otherwise, we risk an unfortunate combined outcome in which those who are already proficient advance, while those who have not yet mastered concepts cannot keep up.

Personalized antibiotic treatment a near possibility

Taking antibiotics to fight an infection will not necessarily solve your problems. Naturally occurring bacteria in the gut often harbor several resistance genes. These bacteria could exchange their resistance genes with infectious bacteria that invade our bodies and result in antibiotic resistance. Knowing the pool of resistance genes — the resistome — present in the gut is therefore very important in improving treatment.



Today, getting resistome-data from a patient takes weeks. In the meantime, the resistome profile might change dramatically, and the patient will suffer from failing health. Every year 700,000 people die of resistant infections, in particular hospitalized patients; and the problem seems to be growing. For many patients, a quick assessment of their personal pool of resistance genes in their feces can be lifesaving.

Now researchers in Denmark have developed a super-fast and cheap method called poreFUME that can quickly shed light on the pool of

resistance genes in the gut. "With this method, you will get an overview of the resistome in 1-2 days, and, hence, be able to start the treatment of the infection sooner and with better results than before," says Eric van der Helm, Postdoc at the Technical University of Denmark.

The poreFUME method using a new gene sequencing method is very rapid compared to current methods, because it does not require growth of the fecal bacteria, which takes time and can be difficult. Also, the data from the device is streamed in real time, so the user does not have to wait until the end of a 'run' to access information about the experiment. The researchers believe that their rapid resistome profiling could lead to personalized antibiotic treatment in high risk patients.

The results from the study showed that the poreFUME method was 97 percent accurate, when compared to standardized resistome profiling methods. This percentage is sufficient when measuring the resistome.

Furthermore, the poreFUME method is much cheaper than current methods, primarily due to the low cost of the so-called MinION; a small handheld DNA-sequencing device, which scientists can start to use for around US\$1,000. In comparison, conventional so-called next generation sequencing devices are priced at between \$50,000 and \$10 million. "If hospitals can purchase equipment for resistome profiling cheaper than today, it opens up for better profiling of more patients and hopefully fewer cases of bacterial resistance," says the research team.

Naps sharpen preschooler's language skills



Learning new words can be a challenge for any preschooler, but kids who take naps may have an advantage when it comes to developing language skills, suggests a new study.

Researchers at the University of Arizona assessed 39 youngsters who were all 3 years old and found those who napped after learning new verbs had a better understanding of the words 24 hours later.

"There's a lot of evidence that different phases of sleep contribute to memory consolidation, and one of the really important phases is slow-wave sleep, which is one of the deepest forms of sleep," said study co-author Rebecca Gomez. During this phase of sleep, the brain is actually replaying memories, thereby strengthening them.

Despite the findings, parents should not fret if they cannot get their preschooler to nap during the day, the researchers noted. The most important thing is total amount of sleep. Preschoolers should get 10 to 12 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.

It is widely accepted that when children do not get enough sleep it can have long-term consequences, including poor performance on mental skill tests. If children do not get enough sleep at night, it is a good idea to encourage them to nap during the day, the study authors suggested.

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Tanzania derives its name from the two separate nation-states – Tanganyika and Zanzibar – which united to form the new nation in 1964.

Tanzania is one of Africa’s most popular safari destinations and home to Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain. Most visitors will find themselves passing through the capital Dar es Salaam and heading out on safaris and various wildlife viewing adventures. For those who want to take a break and spend some time soaking up the sun, the beautiful beaches of Zanzibar beckon. Off Pemba and Mafia islands is a whole other kind of natural wonder, one most appreciated by the scuba divers and snorkelers who seek out the coral gardens, colorful fish, and crystal clear waters.

Nature’s spectacle



Mount Kilimanjaro: One of the most frequented attractions in Tanzania, Mount Kilimanjaro National Park is home to Africa’s highest mountain peak. Unlike other parks in northern Tanzania, this one is not visited for its wildlife, but rather for a chance to view its majestic, snow-capped mountain. Mount Kilimanjaro can be climbed at any time, although the best period is from late June to October.



Lake Victoria: The largest freshwater lake in Africa, Lake Victoria is bordered by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. This lake is the source of the White Nile and provides an income for millions of residents along its shores. The Tanzanian section of Lake Victoria is one of the least visited regions in the country, however the towns of Bukoba, Musoma and Mwanza have a number of attractions. Bird watching and fishing trips are popular excursions, and boat trips or hikes can be arranged around Lake Victoria.

Lake Manyara National Park: This national park comprises of forest, woodland, grasslands, and swamps. Two-thirds of the park is covered



by water and Lake Manyara is host to thousands of flamingoes, at certain times of year, as well as other diverse bird life. The highlight of this park is the large population of elephants, tree-climbing lions and hippos that can be observed at a much closer range than in other parks. This park is also home to the largest concentration of baboons in the world.

Katavi National Park: Located 35km southwest of Mpanda, Katavi National Park is Tanzania’s third-largest national park and one of its most unspoiled wilderness areas. Though it is an isolated alternative to more popular destinations elsewhere in Tanzania, the lodges are just as luxurious as anywhere else, and for backpackers it is one of the cheapest and easiest parks to visit. Katavi’s dominant feature is the 425-sq-km Katisunga Plain, a vast



grassy expanse at the heart of the park. This and other floodplains yield to vast tracts of brush and woodland, which are the best areas for sighting roan and sable antelopes: together with Ruaha National Park, Katavi is one of the few places you have a decent chance of spotting both. Small rivers and large swamps that last all year support huge populations of hippos and crocodiles, and more than 400 bird species. The park really comes to life in the dry season, when the floodplains dry up and elephants, lions, zebras, giraffes, and many more gather at the remaining waters.



Serengeti National Park: A vast treeless plain park with millions of animals searching for fresh grasslands, the Serengeti attracts thousands of

tourists each year. The best months for wildlife viewing are between December and June. Large herds of antelope as well as lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena, bat eared fox, hunting dog and jackal are found here. Adding to this, nearly 500 species of birds have been recorded.

Captivating cultures



Stone Town: Best known as the cultural heart of Zanzibar, Stone Town has grand old Arabian homes lining its narrow streets and winding alleys, giving the city its own unique charm. The majority of homes in Stone Town were built in the 19th Century when Zanzibar was one of the most important Swahili trading towns in the Indian Ocean. Visitors will notice the bras-studded, intricately carved wooden doors on many of the houses. As the world’s oldest functioning Swahili city, many of the landmarks in Stone Town have been restored to their original glory. Some of the historic buildings are now museums which can be visited. The town also has a couple of interesting old churches of historical significance. A walk along Creek Road takes visitors to the original Stone Town area and the location of the Central Darajani Market, Beit el-Amani, City Hall, and the Anglican Cathedral. Some of the other key highlights include the Forodhani Gardens, the Old Dispensary with its carved wooden balconies, the former home of the sultans known as Beit el-Sahel or the People’s Palace, the Hamamni Persian Baths built in 1888, and the oldest structure in Stone Town, the Old Fort.



Tongoni Ruins: About 20km south of Tanga, just off the coastal road, the Tongoni Ruins are set picturesquely between baobabs overlooking the mangrove-lined coast. They include the crumbling remains of a mosque and about 20 overgrown Shirazi pillar-style tombs, the largest collection of such tombs on the East African coast. Both the mosque and the tombs are estimated to date from the 14th or 15th century. Although most of Tongoni’s pillars have long since toppled to the ground, you can still see the recessed areas on some where decorative porcelain vases and offering bowls were placed. There are also about two dozen more recent, and largely unremarkable, tombs dating from the 18th or 19th century.

Islands and Beaches



Zanzibar Beaches: The Zanzibar archipelago consists of the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. The island of Zanzibar, also called Unguja, is a major holiday destination known for its beautiful beaches. This island has some of the best beaches in the world with varying surf depending on what side of the island you are on. Visitors will find soft white sand and clear shallow water, along with traditional boats.



Pemba Island: This Island is the northernmost island in the Zanzibar archipelago. Around Pemba are many desert islands and some of the best scuba diving in the Indian Ocean, with visibility that is unparalleled. Lush coral gardens, colorful sponges and sea fans are all found in this underwater haven. The city of Chake Chake, the main population center on Pemba, is a popular base for scuba divers. Pemba is less visited than Zanzibar and as a result has a more laidback atmosphere. From December to February, visitors can watch traditional bullfighting; a sign from the days of Portuguese dominance in the 16th and 17th Century.



Mafia Island: The Island draws divers and snorkelers from around the world to the undersea world protected by the Mafia Island Marine Park. The best months for diving are October to March. Mafia Island Marine Park has excellent coral gardens, an abundant variety of fish and a relaxed diving atmosphere. Countless birds and over 400 species of fish can be seen in the area. Mafia Island is also a traditional breeding site for the green turtle, which are unfortunately close to extinction.



IOM launches documentary in appreciation of Kuwait's humanitarian efforts

Director General of the International Organization of Migration William Lacy Swing lauded the humanitarian role played by Kuwait during a ceremony held at Kuwait National Library to launch a documentary detailing Kuwait's charitable efforts that are improving the lives of displaced, immigrants and refugees.

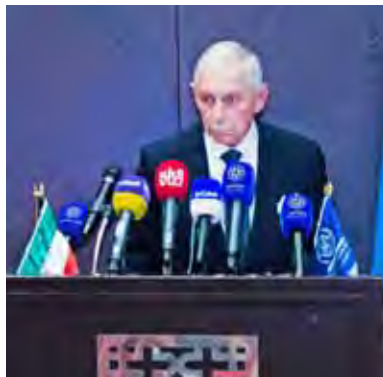
He stated on Sunday, 12 February that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) would contribute to the festivities of the upcoming National and Liberation Day celebrations of Kuwait with the launch of the documentary titled, 'With Their Voices and Words'. He added that Kuwait has always been a source of hope for those suffering from crises, and spared no financial or material effort to help those in need.

Mr. Swing stated that they were



celebrating the "generous aid" of Kuwait, as he praised the generosity of H.H. the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 'Humanitarian Leader', and the Kuwaiti people for offering assistance to those in need.

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, in a statement, said that the documentary highlighted



Kuwait's humanitarian contributions and conveyed the voices of people who benefited from the aid. Kuwait has been keen on providing educational and medical services for those in need, he said, "which made us proud of the size of assistance that Kuwait is offering for the needy."

Those affected by the Iraqi and Syrian crises are featured in the documentary speaking about how the Kuwaiti contributions and support have had a positive effect and given them a better life.

Al-Jarallah thanked the IOM for shedding light on a center built to shelter female workers in Kuwait and provide them with charitable services, which was admired by global humanitarian organizations. Eman Erekat, head of IOM Mission in Kuwait, said her organization produced the documentary in appreciation of Kuwait's humanitarian role around the globe, as well as to highlight the various initiatives spearheaded by H.H. the Amir who created the 'humanitarian diplomacy'. She mentioned that Kuwait's humanitarian aid for the refugees and the displaced included transportation, cleaning materials and tents.

Erekat said more than a million people benefited from Kuwait aid in Syria alone. Kuwait's assistance helped around 4,000 students to attend school every day, offered seven rescue stations for Turkey's coast guard, building four clinics in Lebanon serving 5,000 people, and trained women inside Syria to make carpets to generate income, she said. Kuwait contributed US\$ 25 million towards IOM over four years, she said.



How to get a visa to visit the Netherlands

This visa is solely for the purpose of leisure travel including vacationing, cruising, sightseeing and other recreational activities. If during any portion of their visit to the Netherlands the applicant intends to engage in business, or official duties he/she must refer to other relevant visa categories.

Applications for visa for the Netherlands and the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands are accepted at the Joint Visa Application Centre in Kuwait

Address: Al-Banwan Building, 1st floor, Building 4-B,
Ali Al- Salem Street, Al-Qiblah Area,
Kuwait City (opposite Kuwait Central Bank)

Time frame of the process: The legal processing time for a Schengen visa is 15 calendar days. Please note that your passport will be kept during the visa application process.

Applicants applying at the Netherlands Visa Application Centre shall be levied a non-refundable service charge of KD 10. The cost for the Schengen visa, normal tariff is KD 19.600.

Documents Required: make sure you bring your passport, photographs, completed forms and all supporting documents as per checklist linked here: http://www.vfsglobal.com/netherlands/kuwait/pdf/VFS_Checklist_Visa_tourism.pdf.

According to the checklist for a visa application, applications should be submitted in person (also babies and children) and the following documents must be submitted:

For every document, you must provide the original and one copy.

The documents are to be presented in (or translated to) Dutch, English, French or Spanish.

A completed and signed Schengen visa application form.

A passport or other travel document.

Evidence of legal residence in the country you are applying from, e.g. a passport, visa or residence permit and a copy.

Residence permit should be valid for at least 3 months after departure from Schengen.

Work permit (if applicable).

A passport photo that meets Dutch passport requirements. This photo cannot have been taken more than 6 months ago and must bear a clear resemblance.

Proof of travel that includes:

Travel itinerary (travel reservations to and from Schengen in your name, not a ticket).

Documents proving your visit is for tourist purposes.

Hotel reservation (s) for the duration of your visit.

Bank statements of the last three months.

If you are employed: a declaration from your employer stating the period of absence. Documents proving that you will return to your own country after your trip. Proof of health insurance and your insurance is valid throughout the Schengen area and for the duration of your stay. The insurance policy has been taken out in your name.

A visa, residence permit or passport which gives entry to your final destination after your visit to the Schengen area.

For complete information how to apply for visas please visit: <http://www.vfsglobal.com/netherlands/kuwait/>

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