



LOCAL

Investigations reveal millions spent on fake degrees

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OMAN



Long way to go before Kuwait roads made safe

THE TIMES REPORT

More than 120 people have lost their lives since the start of this year till the middle of May, according to Kuwait's General Directorate of Traffic, a total of 401

each death was still one death too many. Most of those killed in road accidents were victims of rash driving, either drivers and co-passengers of the involved vehicles, or innocent pedestrians. A recent regional survey showed that while improving road

safety and driving experience for the other people who used the roads, but also reduced the benefits of better infrastructure by leading to more road accidents.

Traffic authorities have responded to the increased rash driving by deciding to rescind the driving licenses of erring drivers. While these measures are welcome moves to tamp down on reckless driving, there is growing realization that punishment cannot be a long-term solution. Developing a new traffic strategy that focuses on enhancing road safety management capacity and the safety of road infrastructure, and improving post-crash response, as well as enhancing behavior of drivers, especially among young vehicle owners, by creating awareness on the ethical and social etiquette to follow while driving, are just as important in deterring rash driving, over-speeding and in general reducing traffic accidents in the country.

In line with this need, in 2013, Kuwait launched the the National Traffic ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



fatalities took place on Kuwait's roads in 2018; the victims were mostly young men in the prime of their lives. Though the fatalities were slightly down from the 424 people that were killed in 2017,

infrastructure led to the smoother flow of vehicles and less traffic jams, it also led to increased instances of speeding, tailgating and lane-swerving by rash drivers. This not only decreased road

GCC and ASEAN

A growing friendship

Arthayudh Srisamoot, Thailand's Deputy Permanent Secretary



BY REAVEN D'SOUZA
 MANAGING EDITOR

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) are like minded on many issues and have

similar views on the global agenda and multilateralism, disclosed Arthayudh Srisamoot, Thailand's deputy permanent secretary at the ministry of foreign affairs in an exclusive interview with The Times, Kuwait.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Realizing Vision 2035, an obligation for every Kuwaiti

Developing the northern region of the country and achieving the goals of New Kuwait 2035, to realize the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to transform Kuwait into a commercial, financial and cultural hub in the region, is the obligation and dream of every Kuwaiti and all sectors of society, said a statement issued by the public sector trade union.

The statement came following a meeting between trade union representatives and the

Chairman of the Board and Director General of KUNA Sheikh Mubarak Duaij Al-Sabah.

Developing the public sector and enhancing education are crucial for administering Kuwait's future vision and the work market. The union will work vigorously with all entities in Kuwait to help realize progress in Kuwait through New Kuwait 2035 plan, said the statement.

The New Kuwait 2035 plan will provide numerous job opportunities and bring together Kuwaitis from all walks of life to work unitedly for development and progress



of the country. The unified goal will also lead to battling corruption and bolstering transparency in Kuwait, affirmed the statement.

Social and economic development is important to the vision spearheaded by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said the statement, adding that the union was eager to work with various government entities to promote the development vision via media outlets and other means.

ESF celebrates 51 years of excellence



The English School Fahaheel (ESF) organized their 51st Annual Graduation and Sixth Form prize-giving with great fanfare at the Grand Hashemi Ballroom, Radisson Blu Hotel. Graduates and hundreds of guests thoroughly enjoyed an evening that saw prizes handed out by Chief Guests the Ambassador of India H.E. K. Jeeva Sagar and Deputy Head at the Embassy of Great Britain Tim Voase to Years 12 & 13 students. They were accompanied by the Chairperson of ESF Jasmin Shuhaiber.

Also in attendance were special guests, parents and ESF Alumni. The evening commenced with the entry of the class of 2019 to a huge round of applause from the



parents and guests. School Marketing and PR Manager Adeeb Shuhaiber welcomed the guests to this special event. This was followed by a speech by Mrs. Shuhaiber, Head of Sixth Form Judith Ashton and Head Principal Russell Dunlop. Upper School Principal Michael Hill also addressed the graduates.

Following the prize-giving, Indian Ambassador Sagar gave the graduates a very inspirational speech regarding his academic experiences and touched on the students' future pursuits. This was followed by a speech by Mr. Voase.

The evening concluded with closing words from the Upper School Principal Michael Hill.

Lulu Hypermarket launches Whatsapp marketing campaign



Lulu Hypermarket, the leading retail chain in the region, launched an exciting Whatsapp Marketing Campaign to provide shoppers with news of their latest offers.

Register on Lulu Hypermarket's official Whatsapp number 95500366 to keep ahead of the best offers from the retail giant. All you have to do is just type 'LULU' along with your name and send it to 95500366 to receive all the

latest promotions, news and updates right at your fingertips. Be the first to know about any special discounts, new promotions, special event celebrations or when the latest fashion brands are available at any of Lulu Hypermarket's various outlets in the country.

The Whatsapp campaign is yet another initiative by Lulu Hypermarket to keep connected and regularly interact with their customers.

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NIKON RELEASES TWO CAMERAS

THE NIKON Z 7 AND NIKON Z 6



Nikon Middle East FZE is pleased to announce the release of the full-frame, Nikon FX format mirrorless cameras Nikon Z 7 and Nikon Z 6, as well as NIKKOR Z lenses, featuring a new, larger-diameter mount. The Z mount system is comprised of mirrorless cameras featuring a new, larger-diameter mount, as well as compatible NIKKOR lenses and accessories.

At the heart of the new Z mount system is the new, larger-diameter mount, which unlocks further possibilities of lens design, increasing greater capabilities in optical performance. The Z mount system will offer a variety of high-performance lenses, including the fastest lens in Nikon history, with f/0.95. Additionally, the new mount adapter will enable compatibility with NIKKOR F mount lenses, adding to the variety of choices for photographers.

Meanwhile, the Z 7 and Z 6 are equipped with a new backside illumination full-frame, Nikon FX-format CMOS sensor with built-in focal-plane phase-detection AF pixels, and the

latest image-processing engine, EXPEED 6.

The Z 7 has 45.7 effective megapixels, and supports a standard sensitivity range of ISO 64–25600. In combination with NIKKOR Z lenses, the camera achieves an outstanding level of sharpness and detail, all the way to the edges of the image.

The Z 6 is an all-purpose FX-format camera with an effective pixel count of 24.5 megapixels, and supports the wide range of ISO 100–51200 standard sensitivities. With superior performance at high sensitivities and full-frame 4K UHD movie recording with full pixel readout, the Z 6 responds to a variety of needs, such as shooting in dimly lit environments, and movie recording.

The primary features of the Z 7 and Z 6 include a new backside illumination Nikon FX-format CMOS sensor with built-in focal-plane phase-detection AF pixels. A hybrid AF system with focus points covering approximately 90%

of the imaging area. Additionally, a new EXPEED 6 image-processing engine for sharp and clear imaging, and new functions that support

creative imaging expression, and an electronic viewfinder that utilizes Nikon's superior optical and image-processing technologies to offer a clear and natural view.

Moreover, the cameras are equipped with movie functions such as 10-bit N-Log that enables wide dynamic range, and timecoding that respond to professional needs as well as Nikon's first in-camera vibration reduction with approx. 5.0-stop effectiveness. Moreover, the MB-N10 Multi-Power Battery Pack that is currently in development will hold two EN-EL15b rechargeable Li-ion batteries, effectively increasing the number of shots possible and/or movie recording time by approximately 1.8x.



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More domestic workers headed for Kuwait

In a recent media interview, the Deputy Chairman of Durra Company, Asi Al-Hajri said that the company was in the process of revamping its organizational structure with the aim of making it more streamlined and efficient in delivering its services to the public.

Mandated by the government to recruit, train and supply domestic workers for the local market, Al-Durra has since its establishment in 2017 recruited over 900 domestic workers to Kuwait. The company also indicated that it was exerting all efforts to hire domestic workers from new countries at suitable financial cost in coordination with Ministry of Interior, and in line with regulations set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through agreements

signed with the embassies of respective countries.

Pointing out that the company is working with approved agencies in respective countries to bring domestic labor to Kuwait, Al-Hajri added that if Durra company would receive more assistance from the government in removing obstacles to achieving its objectives, prices would fall and it would be possible to bring in labor at reduced prices to employers.

Al-Hajri explained some of the hurdles facing the company: "Embassies allow us a maximum of 50 workers at a time. Only when these workers have been employed without any problems, does the embassies allow us to bring in 50



more workers. We would like to bring in more workers at a time, as the demand in the local market is high."

He said the company is currently

dealing with the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka, working with government agencies in those countries. He noted that the company aims to open new markets through contact with the Foreign Ministry. He also highlighted the fact that Durra not only offers cheaper prices, but also works with human rights groups, and has signed a protocol with the Human Rights Office in Kuwait to match the terms of employment with human rights principles to improve the image of Kuwait.

He added that the company plans to bring in hundreds of domestic workers to the country in 2019 to reduce prices through agreements between the company and embassies of the concerned states to ensure the rights of the laborers.

IIT-IIM AA hosts Gabqa and Iftar night at Kuwait Towers



IIT-IIM Alumni Association, Kuwait, organized a grand Gabqa and Iftar night combined with quiz sessions at the majestic and iconic Kuwait Towers' Horizons restaurant on Friday, 10 May during the holy month of Ramadan.

The fraternity had a great time in the affectionate company of their families, invited friends, guests from notable organizations and Indian Business and Professional Council, Kuwait. The star of this grand musical extravaganza was the renowned local professional singer Mr. Kabeer, who enthralled the audience with a session of nostalgic tunes. Other distinguished guests present were Ajay Goel, COO, City Centre, Anant Kapadia, General Secretary, IBPC, Rajul Batra, CFO, AlShaya, Vishwanath, Bank of Oman, Ashok Kamtan, a septuagenarian alumnus, of KNPC, who was celebrating his golden jubilee year of his graduation from his IIT, and Mr. Ramadoss, CEO, GTC.



The IIT-IIM Alumni Association President, Peeyush Jain, welcomed all the distinguished guests which included three Principals and several CEOs & CFOs. The three Principals, Anju Dhiman, FAIPS-DPS, Shanta Maria James, ICS, and Mr. Binumon, ICSK, were honored for their yeoman service in the field of education by playing a vital role in preparing the future generations to excel in their chosen professions. There was an audio-based Bollywood songs quiz and Cricket Quiz, with several attendees winning prizes. The attendees enjoyed a variety of delicious snacks, and sumptuous dinner.



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Indian embassy blacklists companies, recruitment agencies

To step up efforts to help the Indian community from falling victim to visa scams in Kuwait, the Indian embassy has published a list of recruitment agencies and companies to avoid. This comes on the heels of the recent news story where 200 Indians were trapped in Kuwait after paying money to a recruitment agency to get them visas to work in Kuwait. Visa trading has left many Indians stranded in Kuwait

without employment or the ability to look after themselves. They are also often at the mercy of Kuwait authorities.

The Indian embassy has in the past warned the public to be wary of job offers after coming across frequent cases of fake job offers being made by unscrupulous agencies/agents in the name of respectable Kuwaiti Companies/Business entities. Indian applicants, without exercising due prior

caution, are either landing up in Kuwait or are making substantial payments for jobs that do not exist / have never been offered.

Thus, the Indian Embassy urges all concerned to exercise utmost care and caution, read the Do's and Don'ts on Mission's website, and also verify the authenticity of the job offers as well as the genuineness of the Visas directly from the company. The officer concerned in

this Embassy can also be contacted at: attachelabour@indembkwt.gov.in, labour@indembkwt.gov.in in case of suspicious offers.

Here is the list of companies and recruitment agencies to avoid.

<https://www.timeskuwait.com/news/indian-embassy-releases-list-of-kuwaiti-companies-and-agencies-to-be-avoided-from-recruiting-indian-workers/>

Taiba hospital signs agreement with Belgium's hict to optimize services



Taiba Hospital, a private healthcare provider in Kuwait, signed a collaboration agreement with hict, a Belgian consultancy company, at the Belgian Embassy in Kuwait. In attendance at the ceremony were CEOs Lama Al Fadala and Jan Demey accompanied by the Belgian Ambassador H.E. Piet Heirbaut.

relationship between Kuwait and Belgium.

The emergence of this collaboration came after a series of studies and visits were conducted between both parties in order to better visualize Taiba Hospital's future plans. "We are delighted to partner with hict...[to] determine the best way to maximize operational excellence through their performance measurement and comprehensive strategic assessment system for the hospital," said CEO Al Fadala.

hict, which operates in Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, is specialized in optimizing healthcare services in the field through the diligent monitoring of efficiency and regulatory processes and providing solutions for them.

On his part, CEO Demey stated, "Our two companies have the same DNA structure and we feel the same heartbeat when it comes to making healthcare better for our citizens and for our customers. The outcome of this project is the assurance to all patients that they will always be provided with the best medical and healthcare services."



Opening the ceremony, the Belgian Ambassador Heirbaut asserted the prominence this project will have in strengthening the

ICAI Kuwait Chapter organised Iftar and CPE session

Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Kuwait Chapter conducted an Iftar event as well as its Continuing Professional Educational (CPE) session for the benefit of its member and their families on 25 May at Copthorne Hotel, Kuwait City. The topic of the session was 'About 5G - The Foundation of 4th Industrial Revolution' led by speaker Zarrar Khan, Chief Technology Officer, VIVA Telecom. The Chief Guest of Honor was the CEO of Qualitynet Mohamad Al Nusif at the event, which was well attended by an audience of more than 130 people.

CA Sai Devata, Chairman of the Chapter initially briefed the members about various activities planned by Kuwait Chapter for the current year.

Zarrar explained the impact of 4th industrial revolution on human privacy and the rapid pace of technological advancement which is going to impact the customer lifestyles by enriching customer experience. During this session, Al Mulla Exchange also conducted a lucky draw event exclusive for its CA customers with five lucky winners getting amazing prizes.



Huawei hosts Ghabka for media personnel



During the Holy month of Ramadan, Huawei Consumer Business Kuwait (CBG) invited the social media influencers and media personnel for a Ghabka on 21 May at the elegant The Palms Beach Hotel and Spa with its special interior décor.

This Ramadan, Huawei celebrat-



ed this special occasion with media members and influencers who have always lent their support to the brand. General Manager, Huawei CBG Kuwait, Jason Jiang, welcomed the gathering with a speech.

The event included live music and an enticing Ramadan Buffet of delicacies and traditional favorites.

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Investigations reveal millions spent on fake degrees

The Ministry of Higher Education in cooperation with relevant investigative agencies and the public prosecution is continuing its fight against fake degrees with new evidence of illegal certifications emerging every day.

It is estimated that thousands of employees currently working in ministries and other government organizations, as well as in the private sector obtained fake degrees and other illegal certificates by paying money that totals multi-million dinars to unscrupulous agents and shady educational institutions. Following the widespread evaluation of certificates in various public sector organizations, many people were found to have obtained jobs and promotions on the basis of false degrees, including masters and doctoral degrees. The

discovery and discrediting of these workers has resulted in huge financial loss to many of them in addition to suffering the ignominy of being branded cheats.

The authorities have so far discovered and cancelled fake certificates worth around KD4.4 million that citizens had obtained from various countries. Citizens were found to have obtained fake degrees from India, Philippines, Greece and Slovakia among other places. A total of 190 citizens obtained fake certificates from India, with 189 of them obtaining an illegal degree certificate by paying KD4,000 each and one receiving a masters degree for a payment of KD7,000.

The authorities have also discovered a total of 562 fake certificates obtained by citizens from the Philippines, 214 from Greece and 57 from Slovakia. Among those obtaining



degrees from the Philippines were six doctorate degree holders who are said to have bought their certificates for KD12,000 each, 24 masters degree holders who paid KD6,800 per certificate, and 532 people who gave KD3,000 each to receive a bachelor's degree.

The number of people receiving a fake certificate from Greece included 36 who received a doctorate degree by paying

KD15,000 per certificate; 38 who obtained a master's degree for KD6,800 apiece, and 140 people who became graduates by buying a Bachelor's Degree for KD5,000 each.

The 57 fake certificates from Slovakia were specialized technical degrees, including in industrial and civil engineering degrees, which came at a relatively cheap price to the holders at KD5,000 each.

An official source confirmed that the investigations were continuing and more fake degrees would be discovered and holders of these certificates would be referred to the public prosecution so that suitable action could be initiated against them. The fight against the scourge of false certificates would continue until the last fake graduate, post-graduate and doctor was found and prosecuted said the source.



Lulu Hypermarket launches Shopping Gift Card scheme

Lulu Hypermarket, the retailer of choice for discerning shoppers, launched a new Shopping Gift Card scheme titled 'One Gift Unlimited Choices'. The scheme was launched on 1 June at the retailer's Al-Rai branch by



the top management of Lulu Kuwait, in the presence of a large gathering of shoppers, well-wishers and media personnel.

Also attending the launch event were representatives from Alwazah Tea (swan brand)

who made an initial purchase of cards worth KD10,000 to present to the charity organization, Revival of Islamic Heritage, Kuwait.

The multi-value shopping gift cards are ideal for presenting to someone on special occasion, such as on birthdays, graduation or anniversaries, or to celebrate religious events. The cards are available in three value formats of KD50, KD25 and KD10, and can be utilized to its full value without any extra charges.

In addition, the card, which is valid for a period of 12 months from the date of purchase, can be used to make multiple purchases, with the balance carried forward each time until the total value of the card has been utilized.

The new gift card is a great value present for friends, family or loved ones, since it gives recipients the convenience of buying products they want from the extensive range of items and choices available on the shelves of Lulu Hypermarkets in the country.

Long way to go before Kuwait...

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Transport Strategy (NTTS) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and corresponding with the UN Decade of Action (2011-2020). The \$16 million partnership project with UNDP saw planners, designers, managers, and decision makers in the country receiving formation, guidance and assistance in developing the new traffic strategy. One outcome of this cooperation was the restructuring of the General Directorate of Traffic (GDT) and the establishment of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

Kuwait created PART in 2014 and tasked the entity with many responsibilities ranging from establishing and maintaining road infrastructure and transport networks in the country to preparing a comprehensive new transport strategy. The new plan would include an extensive rail transport system with local stations, and which would eventually link to the pan-Gulf railway network, as well as a metro system linking urban areas with business, shopping and entertainment centers. PART was also assigned to examine and certify vehicles for road worthiness, test and issue driving licenses to new drivers, create awareness on road safety and enhance the culture of public transportation in Kuwait.

Overwhelmed with responsibilities PART struggled to take-off, especially since it was hampered by other ministries such as the Public Works Ministry and the Ministry of Interior, which strongly objected to PART taking over their territory and were reluctant to hand over their traditional authority to an upstart

organization. As with most things in Kuwait, despite government support, PART was sidelined for several years even as road infrastructure continued to worsen and plans to implement the public transportation network gathered dust.

In early November of last year following heavy rains, and poor maintenance of road infrastructure, many roads turned into raging rivers that washed vehicles, damaged property and injured several dozen people. The government responded to accusations of shoddy road maintenance by firing the director-general of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), the entity that also had the responsibility of maintaining public transport infrastructure in the country. Six months later, though there is a new director-general at the helm of PART, road and transport infrastructure remains the same, traffic congestion continues to exasperate commuters, and victims of traffic accidents keep growing. Obviously, shifting chairs is not the answer to Kuwait's traffic and infrastructure woes. And, before any lawmaker suggests it, getting rid of expatriates is not the answer either.

The Safe System approach to road safety proposed by WHO aims to ensure a safe transport system for all road users. Such an approach takes into account people's vulnerability to serious injuries in road traffic crashes and recognizes that the system should be designed to be forgiving of human error. The cornerstones of this approach are safe roads and roadsides, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and safe road users, all of which must be addressed in order to eliminate fatal crashes and reduce serious injuries.

Global Status on Road Safety

According to the latest World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety, road 'accidents' were responsible for more than 1.35 million deaths worldwide in 2018, tantamount to one death every 24 seconds or 3,600 fatalities in a day. To put it in a more gruesome perspective, the deaths are equivalent to nearly the entire Kuwaiti population becoming victims of road accidents in a year.

More than half (54%) of the 1.35 million road fatalities in 2018 were pedestrians, two-wheel drivers and pillion-riders. Occupants inside vehicles accounted for a further 31 percent of crash victims, while the remaining 15 percent were unspecified road users. Road accidents are now the eighth leading cause of death for all age groups worldwide, surpassing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and diarrhoea diseases.

In addition, more than 30 million people are estimated to suffer injuries as a direct result of traffic accidents each year. Some are permanently disabled while others sustain injuries that lead to productivity and economic loss for the individuals, their families and to the nation. It is estimated that road traffic accidents cost countries on average around 3 percent of their gross domestic product each year.

However, it is a misnomer to label these traffic mishaps as "accidents". There is nothing accidental about the incidents, in most cases the deaths and injuries are the result of preventable causes ranging from the low safety aspects and poor maintenance of vehicles to the lack of proper roads and other infrastructure, from rash driving to drinking and

driving distractions.

Records show that fewer traffic accidents, and consequently fewer deaths and injuries, occur in developed countries than in low- and middle-income nations. Of the total road fatalities in 2018, a disproportionately high 93 percent occurred in low- and middle-income countries where 60 percent of all global vehicular traffic ply. By contrast, high-income countries, despite having 40 percent of vehicle traffic, accounted for only 7 percent of all traffic related deaths last year.

Statistics from the WHO report also show that traffic related injuries are now the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years. Young males are more likely to be involved in road traffic crashes than females. About three-quarter (73%) of all road traffic deaths were shown to occur among young males under the age of 25 years who are almost three times as likely to be killed in a road traffic crash as young females.

Rash driving, over-speeding, and distractions while driving are leading causes of death among the young. The WHO report pointed out that an increase in average speed was directly related both to the likelihood of a crash occurring and to the severity of the consequences of the crash. Studies have shown that every 1 percent increase in mean speed produces a 4 percent increase in the fatal crash risk and a 3 percent increase in the serious crash risk. Moreover, the death risk for pedestrians hit by car fronts rises rapidly by 4.5 times as speed surges from 50kmph to 65kmph. The fatality risk for car occupants in car-to-car side impacts is as high as 85 percent at 65kmph.



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No jobs marked for 1,200 Egyptians, says Kuwaiti official

Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel on Friday denied reports about planned employment of 1,200 Egyptians in the country. She stressed that the Public Authority of Manpower does not intervene in works of private companies and does not ask for the employment of workers of certain



nationalities. The labor market is open for the companies to choose the workers that match their needs and with

respect to qualifications and payments, she added.

Only the employer is eligible to specify the number of available jobs, in line with the number of the quota of nationalities allowed by the ministry of interior and the relevant regulations, minister Al Aqeel asserted.



Ethiopian Airlines holds Iftar



Ethiopian Airlines organized a grand Iftar party last week which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from different travel companies, customers, media personnel and well-wishers.

Ethiopian Airlines Area Manager Kuwait, Samson Arega delivered a brief speech on the success story of the airline. He elaborated on how it has witnessed remarkable progress and emerged as the strongest aviation brand with an outstanding 73 years of service in the industry.

He further explained the key strategic business units of the Ethiopian Airlines Aviation Group and their ability to deliver an excellent ground and onboard experience to esteemed customers through state of the art technology.

Promoting the newly launched weekly direct cargo flights to and from Kuwait to Ethiopia, Mr. Arega said this would help connect Kuwait to the airline's entire cargo network. He also pointed out that the airline is now operating 111 state-of-the-art aircraft with an average fleet age of five years and consisting of both Boeing and Airbus aircraft.

He added that the airline had transported 11 million passengers during the last fiscal year and has surpassed Dubai as an international and main gateway to the continent of Africa, with 120 international, 46 freighter and 22 domestic destinations. Mr. Arega highlighted that with an annual revenue of US\$4 billion, the airline is striving to expand while excelling in all parameters of the industry.

The event also witnessed prizes being handed over to the winners of the question and answer by the area manager.



Former OFW in Kuwait takes oath of office as member of OWWA Board of Trustees

RICKY LAXA
STAFF WRITER

Former Overseas Filipino Worker in Kuwait and staff at the Ministry of Health Dr. Chie Umandap took an oath of office as member of trustees under the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) under the President Duterte government. Dr. Umandap along with another new set of officials was present at the Malacanang Palace for the oath-taking ceremony on Monday morning.

In a brief phone interview with Dr. Umandap, he told The Times Kuwait that he feels honored for having topped the list of nominees for Sectoral Representatives to the Board of Trustees of OWWA and that he has formed a group OFW Advisory Council namely; Lito B. Soriano, Marcia Gonzalez-Sadicon, Maxxie Santiago, Emmanuel Geslani, Atty. Marlon Valderama, Francis Oca, Francis Naval, Gemma Sotto and Former Under Secretary Rafael Seguis to help in the review of proposals and resolutions.

Dr. Umandap is currently a columnist of Bantay OFW with Saksi Ngayon Newspaper. He also designed his own Bantay OFW Mobile App for monitoring the OFW applications. He also has the following list of accolades to his name: the 2011 Bagong Bayani Pilipino Awards for Community and Social Services, presented by H.E. Benigno S. Aquino at Malacanang Palace, 2018 Commission on Filipinos Banaag Award nominee, 2012

Gawad Geny Lopez Global Bayaning Pilipino Award for Community and Social Service, 2009 Outstanding Filipino Community Leader (Kuwait) presented by H.E. Joseph Ejercito Estrada at State of Kuwait (Award received as Chairman of the Filipino Badminton Committee), and Special Certificate of Gratitude for Outstanding Filipino Community Leaders during his term organized 'Pamaskong Handog Project' for about 150 stranded OFWs in OWWA Center. He solicited help from different organizations and purchased a truckload of mattresses, blankets, cooking

organizations. In addition to the Founding Chairperson of Samahan ng mga Dentista sa Kuwait (SADEK) (Dentist Association of Kuwait). He was also the Interim Vice Chairman of Council of Leaders of Filipino Communities in Kuwait and during his term organized 'Pamaskong Handog Project' for about 150 stranded OFWs in OWWA Center. He solicited help from different organizations and purchased a truckload of mattresses, blankets, cooking



Jimenez during the Labor Day Celebration on May 2009.

In Kuwait, Dr. Umandap took active leadership founding of Advocates & Keepers Organizations of OFW (AKO-OFW) in 2015, Advocates/Volunteers that aim to protect the Rights and Welfare of every OFW, Founding Chairperson of Kilusan Kabuhayan at Kabayanihan (KKK), Founding Chairperson of Kilos Kalikasan Project- a beach clean-up campaign in coordination with the Philippine Overseas labor Office, Philippine Embassy, Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Health and various Filipino

range and cooking utensils. During the turnover ceremonies, he invited a band that rendered entertainment for less fortunate kababayan. Authored the 'Handog-Tulong sa Kapwa Project' where each organization was asked to solicit used clothes and canned goods for the typhoon victims in Pampanga.

"I can but pray that we be guided to the right path and formulate essential and beneficial decisions for the welfare, security and well-being of our OFWs around the world and we ask for the support of every Filipino," stated Dr. Umandap.

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“

If there is a secret in the Arabian peninsula then it has to be Oman. Sharing borders with UAE, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Oman is distinctively a world of its own, with an embracing society that warmly welcomes visitors, the Omani experience is something that should not be missed.

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The Splendour of Arabia

STAFF REPORT

If there is a secret in the Arabian peninsula then it has to be Oman. Sharing borders with UAE, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Oman is distinctively a world of its own, with an embracing society that warmly welcomes visitors, the Omani experience is something that should not be missed.

Oman has so much to offer that one visit may not be enough to see, experience and absorb the incredible attractions, natural beauty, authentic architecture and unique culture, making it among the great destinations that have stood the test of time.

Muscat: The country's capital, Muscat, is without doubt a breath of fresh air, in the literal sense as well. Situated on the coast and surrounded by arid Hajjar Mountains, there is an instant connection with nature. Muscat offers an absorbing snapshot of the country's past and present.



Away from the traffic snarl or flashy skyscrapers, Oman gives visitors a truly Arabian experience that is steeped in the past yet in total sync with modernity. Luxurious malls and multi lane highways give the modern touch that visitors can see but it is the country's tradition and heritage that is so fascinating about Muscat.

Muscat is a treasure trove of attractions from museums, mosques, forts, palaces, the opera house, beaches, corniche and souks, the list is endless. So much to discover and

experience that whatever one's taste there is a variety of choices available.

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque: The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque is an architectural splendour, with its arches, decorations, lights and colors, every corner of the mosque is



an absolute architectural gem. Beauty from every angle, the mosque has a magnificent Swarovski crystal chandelier in the center that is strikingly awesome. The engravings on the wall and the single Persian rug, the second



Flying high with Oman Air

In keeping with the growth of Oman as the most favored tourist destination in the region Oman Air has been rising to the occasion with more flights, bigger aircrafts and better connections. The spanking new airport in Muscat aims to double the number of passengers from 18 million to 40 million by 2030.



As a recognition of its service standards Oman Air has won a number of awards and received countless commendations from various independent sources. Oman Air commitment to maintaining quality and after sales service has also attracted

commendable response from the industry. But Oman Air is not just about awards, the inflight service has a personal touch that goes beyond just comfort and entertainment. The service levels have been maintained to the highest standards ensuring both safety and comfort.

Three daily flights from Kuwait to Muscat allow



passengers to connect to over 50 destinations around the world and this has given Oman Air the leverage of being a truly international airline.

Mustapha El Hamoui, the country manager of Oman Air in Kuwait, has viewed Kuwait as a very important market since taking over two years ago. Not only has he raised service levels but El Hamoui has been quick to adapt to market requirements and become a trend setter in the industry for his quick response. Hence it is no surprise that Kuwait office of Oman Air has seen a significant growth in passenger numbers. With Oman increasingly becoming a destination of choice among travelers in Kuwait, Oman Air has been able to rise to the challenge and provide the best services and connections between Kuwait City and Muscat.

Mezoon International Travel & Tours LLC

Meزون Travel is a pioneer in the field of Travel & Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman having been founded in 1972 as a division of the Omar Zawawi Establishment (OMZEST) Group of Companies – one of the premier business and industrial groups in Oman.

As the finest Destination Management Services provider in Oman, with years of extensive, hands-on experience, Mezoon Travel provides leisure and business travelers with a unique travel experience. Catering to the needs of individual travelers, groups and the MICE market, Mezoon Travel is the appointed destination management company for many large Middle Eastern, European, American and Far Eastern tour operators.

The company is the General Sales Agent (GSA) of SriLankan Airlines, Swiss International Air Lines & Lufthansa German Airlines, Go Airlines (India) Ltd., Egypt Air, Singapore Airlines, Royal Jordanian, Iran Air, Air Mauritius, Middle East Airlines, Air Arabia Cargo and Salam Air Cargo majority of them are operating from this location.

In addition, Mezoon Tours, division of Mezoon Travel, will provide high quality tour packages and services for In-bound and Out-bound customers from the same headquarters, while continue to serve its clients in and beyond the Muscat governorate with branches in Al Ghubra, Sohar and Salalah. The Cargo & Freight Forwarding office is situated at the New Muscat International Airport, Cargo Terminal for smooth operations.

Meزون Travel was bestowed the 'Oman's Most Trusted Brand 2017' award in the category of Travel and Tourism.





Impressive & Timeless

of Oman in the 6th and 7th centuries AD. The town forms a natural access point for the historic sites of Bahla and Jabrin, and for excursions up the mountain roads to Jebel Akhdar and Jebel Shams.

The Nizwa Fort built in 1668 by Imam Sultan Bin Saif Al Ya'rubī, is among Oman's most visited national monuments. The fort was the administrative seat of authority for the presiding Imams and Walis in times of peace and conflict. The main bulk of the fort took about 12 years to complete and was built above an underground stream.

The fort is a reminder of the town's significance through turbulent periods in Oman's long history. It was a formidable stronghold against raiding forces that desired Nizwa's



abundant natural wealth and its strategic location at the crossroads of vital routes.

Just a 45 minute drive from Nizwa is the Jebel Akhdar or the Green Mountain, part of the Al Hajar Mountains range. It is one of Oman's most spectacular areas and the highest point Jabal Shams (Mountain of the Sun), which is around 3,000 metres, is not only the highest point in Oman but the whole of eastern Arabia. This area is not only famous for its traditional rose water extraction and agricultural products including pomegranate, apricot, peach and walnut, it also has several important rock art sites, whose oldest figures dating back to 6000 years ago, have been discovered and studied.

Falaj Daris, a world heritage site, is the life maintainer of Nizwa, providing the surrounding countryside with much needed water for the plantations. A short drive away is the Tanuf waterfalls and a little further is Bahla, dominated by a large fort it is a delightful town which has retained its traditional characteristics. Famous for its pottery, most of which is still produced by traditional methods.



History in Nizwa: Not to be missed on a visit to Oman is the historic town of Nizwa with its giant fort and high-walled souq. The town lies on a plain surrounded by a thick palm oasis and some of Oman's highest mountains. Nizwa is the second-biggest tourist destination in Oman. The seat of factional imams until the 1950s, Nizwa, or the 'Pearl of Islam' as it is sometimes called, is still a conservative town.

Located in the heart of Oman about 165 km from Muscat and just hour and half drive away on the well maintained highway, Nizwa is a city steeped in culture and was the capital



largest in the world, which covers the entire mosque floor add to the interior beauty.

Constructed over a period of seven years and opened in 2001, the Mosque however feels like it is almost brand new. Well maintained and impressively

organised, the visit to this Omani gem is a must and can leave one completely awestruck with the beauty that is so well harmonised with its natural surroundings of a big garden and different types of plants, trees and flowers.



A contemporary upscale business hotel, Sundus Rotana is an ideal choice for corporate and leisure travellers visiting the Sultanate's busy capital. Sundus Rotana Muscat, a modern 4-star hotel is the first property of Rotana, one of the leading hospitality management companies in the Middle East, Africa and Turkey, in Oman's vibrant capital.

Minutes away from Muscat International Airport and the new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, Sundus Rotana, Muscat gives its guests an unforgettable experience with spacious rooms and suites and contemporary furnishings and stylish décor that ensure guests feels at home.

The hotel is also home to four signature restaurants set to add a new 'flavor' to Muscat's dining scene. From innovative fusion cuisine at the signature restaurant, Teatro, an award-winning concept serving 5 different cuisines with an open kitchen, cooking stations and a dedicated sushi bar showcasing the variety of

fusion, to Fumo by Ginger a chic poolside lounge, to the all-day dining restaurant Ginger, guests are invited to take a culinary journey around the world. Ginger boasts a sumptuous international buffet, complemented by an à la carte menu for guests seeking a specific dish or cuisine cooked exactly to their taste. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, this contemporary venue offers indoor and outdoor seating in casual, yet stylish surroundings.

For informal dining, the guests can choose the stylish Lobby Lounge café, Fumo by Ginger or extensive 24 Hours In-Room Dining menu, while Club Rotana guests can enjoy complimentary beverages and snacks in the Club Rotana Lounge.

The property also boasts of flexible meeting and conference rooms and an elegant ballroom, Sundus Rotana has all event needs covered, whether the guests are planning an important board meeting, a training workshop, a private event, or a social occasion for colleagues and business partners.

The venues feature state-of-the-art facilities and the latest audio-visual technology to meet the complex requirements of today's modern executives, teamed with personalised management services to ensure any event runs smoothly and according to the guest's exact specifications. An elegant and versatile Diwan ballroom is 380sqm, ideal

for banquets, conferences, social occasions and weddings.

For guests looking for a place to work out or relax the Bodylines Fitness & Wellness Club is the perfect location. Featuring a fully-equipped, contemporary gymnasium including cardiovascular equipment and a free-weight training area, plus a swimming pool and steam rooms, the fitness and wellness needs are well catered to under one roof.

Conveniently located minutes away from the Muscat International Airport and the new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, the 4-star hotel is also close to the city's major landmarks, attractions and commercial districts.

Stylish comfort at Sundus Rotana

The place to stay when visiting Muscat

CSC announces Eid Al-Fitr holidays from 4 to 6 June

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced Wednesday that Eid Al-Fitr holidays would be on Tuesday, 4 June, ending Thursday, 6 June. Official working hours shall resume on Sunday, 9 June, whether

Eid fell on Tuesday or not, CSC said in a press statement.

State authorities with special working hours should arrange their work timings in a manner that would serve the public interest.

Thought for the week

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Reports of high temperature questionable

Unofficial news report in print and online media of scorching temperatures close to 70 degrees Celsius on Monday, may not be fully accurate.

Daily temperatures quoted by meteorological stations is based on standard measuring conditions for air temperature at a height of 1.5 meters above the ground, and shielded from direct sunlight. The temperature on the ground could exceed the heat measured in the air by 30 to 50 air temperatures. Ground temperatures could exceed air temperatures by as much as 30 to

50°C. What was measured on Monday was probably the ground temperature and in direct sunlight.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the highest air temperature recorded on Earth was 56.7 °C (134.1 °F) on 10 July, 1913 in the United States at the Death Valley desert in California. The earlier record of 57.8 recorded in Aziziya, Libya on 13 September, 1922, was disproved based on persuasive evidence in 2012.

The current record temperature is being questioned by some meteorologists who



allege that the readings were influenced by a sandstorm in the desert at the time of

the measurement. If the 1913 record is also found inaccurate, then the next highest recorded temperature is 54.0°C measured, both in Death Valley desert on 20 June, 2013, and at the weather station in Mitribah, northwest Kuwait, on 21 July 2016.

So, while Kuwait is among the hottest place on Earth, at least with regard to temperature, it still had a long way to go on Monday when the official temperature recorded was a relatively mild 45°C. But summer has not reached its peak this year, and we can always hope!

American Business Council Kuwait hosts annual Iftar dinner



The American Business Council Kuwait (ABCK) hosted its annual Ramadan Iftar at the Four Seasons Hotel on 21 May. The event, which was sponsored by Boeing Middle East, welcomed members of The Kuwait Disabled Sports Club whose worldwide achievements were recognized on the occasion.

In his opening speech, ABCK's Vice Chairman Fred Shuaibi, thanked all present and the sponsor for being a strong supporter of ABCK. He also thanked US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman, and the Chairman of the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Shafi Al Hajeri for attending the event. He then went on to express ABCK's pleasure to host "club members and amazing athletes who have achieved so much this year".

Quoting the US President who had recently said: "Ramadan is the time of charity, of giving and service to fellow citizens. It is a time to draw closer as families, neighbors and communities", the vice chairman added that it was in the spirit of the president's message that ABCK was hosting this year's Iftar.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Silverman stated: "Ramadan highlights the strong community spirit within



Kuwait. I have enjoyed attending many Iftars, diwanis, and ghabgas over the past two weeks. I would like to thank ABCK for organizing this iftar and Boeing for sponsoring it. ABCK has had an active calendar of events over the past several months and the embassy looks forward to partnering with ABCK on a terrific line-up of events beginning again in the fall, to help contribute to the growth of the US-Kuwait bilateral trade and investment relationship."

For his part, Bernard Dunn, president of Boeing Middle East, Africa and Turkey, said: "Tonight serves as a reminder that kindness, understanding and respect are fundamental pillars to the betterment of any community and that each of us has an important part to play in the country's development."

This year's Iftar event welcomed a total of 100 people, including ABCK members, executives, athletes from the Kuwaiti Disabled Sports Club, and distinguished guests. Thanking ABCK for the Iftar party, Al-Hajeri added, "Friendship, collaborations and charity are three magic human values. We must work hard to enhance them to lead us to a better world."

Kuwait's popular DJ passes away

Linda Lou Al-Shammari, born on 27 April, 1957, was a popular former DJ on Radio Kuwait's FM 99.7 channel with her own morning show. She passed away in the US at her home in North Carolina on Monday, 27 May.

Linda's lively and bubbly voice made the breakfast show very popular in Kuwait, especially among many drivers who turned to her show from Monday to Thursday for some respite from the morning rush-hour traffic.

Many residents of Kuwait recall fondly her lively and easy going personality, and remember how she filled their mornings with joy. Anselm Pereira, one commuter who regularly listened to her show had this to say: "Listening to Linda Lou in the morning would make my day. Her voice was magical and full of energy that would fill me with positive vibes. I had a wonderful moment, a chance to meet her in person at the studio and share a line on the radio."

Many listeners of Linda's radio show remember particular things about her, like Farah Bishara, who said, "You were the first voice I ever heard on the radio, making my mornings lively and planting a love for radio in my heart. Thank you for being a part of our beautiful memories, your constant telling us to wear our seatbelts, and for being so cool!"

Alya Osman remarked, "Linda's voice, charm, and charisma were the highlight of so many school bus rides

when my family moved to Kuwait in 2006. We have missed her ever since she went off the air and are deeply saddened to hear of her passing."

She was also a great source of comfort to the expat community, Irma Tamez said, "When I first moved to Kuwait... I was extremely homesick. Eventually, I heard about her morning show and would listen to her daily. Her mannerism, wit and charm made



me feel at home and comforted me until I got used to Kuwait. We were all saddened when she left Kuwait. Linda Lou was loved by all and will be greatly missed."

Her colleagues, who worked with her at the radio station, praise her work ethic and ability to connect with her audience. Naji Al-Fozan said, "I worked with Linda Lou during the early days of 99.7. She was always a kind and warm hearted person, a loyal and a dedicated hard worker. Her positivity and warmth always lit up the studio. She will be missed. I wish her family comfort and peace in this time of sorrow."

IMA hosts inter-faith Iftar gathering

Indian Muslim Association Kuwait (IMA) recently conducted an interfaith Iftar get-together for expatriates of all faith to promulgate the message of Ramadan at Dhoom Hall Abu Halifa. A large number of people from different walks of life attended the program.

Dr. Teresa Leshar, Manager TIES center Kuwait was the chief guest of the occasion. Guest speaker, Venkata Siva Rao Koduri, President Life Again, Kuwait chapter emphasized that fasting should not be limited to refraining from food, one must also refrain from evil and develop respect for each other's faith.



Vinay Muthyala, President, Telengana Jagruthi Kuwait, commended IMA's social and environmental activities. Dr. Ananthi Natarajan, President, Frontliners Association and Sai Devata, Chairman, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Kuwait chapter also graced the occasion.

Chief Guest of the evening Dr.



Teresa Leshar, in her address, stressed on the importance of focusing on the similarities between different faiths rather than the differences. Then, Nisar Ahmad gave a presentation on the topic 'Ramadan: A time for Reflection' highlighting the importance of Ramadan. Keynote Speaker, Sharfuddin Soofi, speaking on the topic 'Way to



communal harmony' stressed the importance of unity in diversity which

helps people in building harmony in a multi-cultural society such as India.

Kazakhstan to elect new president



H.E. ALMAS ABDRAMANOV
Ambassador of
Kazakhstan to Kuwait

On 9 June, Kazakhstan will hold a presidential election. This is an important moment, not least because a head of state can take the country in a particular direction and set tasks and priorities for government that can have an impact on the country and beyond. It is also the first time in almost thirty years that a new President of the Republic of Kazakhstan will be elected.

The upcoming election is promising to be the most competitive and diverse in Kazakhstan's history as an independent nation. A total of seven candidates have been registered by the Central Election Commission. The list includes the first female candidate to run for President – Daniya Yespayeva from the Ak Zhol party.

It would be a fair assessment to say that our wider region is heavily male-dominated when it comes to politics. However, over many years, Kazakhstan has taken concrete steps to improve gender equality and to promote women's role in business and politics. We



are now witnessing the fruits of this labor. In addition to Ms. Yespayeva, the Senate Chairwoman as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Science are also female, as are approximately a quarter of the members of Parliament in Kazakhstan. Another aspect of the election which experts have focused on is the competitiveness and fairness of the process. This is understandable, as according to some organizations and analysts, our region as a whole is still developing the necessary democratic institutions and mechanisms to ensure completely fair and open elections.

Nevertheless, I believe Kazakhstan is once

again demonstrating that it is going beyond the general expectations and foregone conclusions. As is well known, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev promised that the election will be transparent and to the highest expected standards. The country can already offer concrete examples of the sincerity of this pledge. For example, presidential candidate Amirzhan Kossanov has been in opposition to the government for around two decades. He, and all candidates, are now openly campaigning in the hope of securing people's votes.

Kazakhstan has always welcomed observers and their constructive feedback during previous elections, and this time

more than 1,000 international observers from ten international organizations, as well as foreign countries, are expected to be in Kazakhstan for the election. Our government has officially invited the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States and numerous other organizations. Their missions are now deploying across the country.

The upcoming vote is not just important to Kazakhstan, but to our neighbors and partners all over the world. As is known, Kazakhstan has been actively participating in global affairs, including, most recently, the resolution of the Syrian conflict. From an economic perspective, our government has also been vigorously improving Kazakhstan's investment climate, making us the number one investment destination in the region.

This is especially relevant to Kuwait, due to the actively developing trade and economic relations with Kazakhstan in recent years, and with which Kazakhstan has strong and reliable partnership in humanitarian, political and cultural spheres.

The results of the presidential election will be officially confirmed by 16 June. Active work will then begin to continue to develop close ties between Kazakhstan and Kuwait. We have every reason to be confident about the future and the cooperation between our countries.



The 59th Grand Hyper showroom opens in Hawally

Grand Hyper counted among the leading hypermarket chains in GCC opened their 59th outlet on 30 May at Tunis street, Hawally.

Grand Hypermarket Hawally spanning across an area 23000 sq. feet was inaugurated



jointly by Regency Group MD Dr. Anvar Ameen and Ex-Director General of Public Manpower Authority Jamal Al Dossary in the presence of Ayuob Kaccheri (Regional Director), Mohammed Suneer PC (CEO), Rahil Bassim (COO), Tahsir Ali

(General Manager) and other management representatives. The inaugural event saw a huge turnout of members from the local community.

As part of the festivities, the new hypermarket has announced special prices for various products and a lucky draw contest where participants have a chance to win up to \$150000 after shopping at the hypermarket. The new offers are available at all the outlets as well as this new hypermarket during Ramadan.

Grand Hypermarket has built a strong reputation and engendered trust in the Kuwait market as a brand for providing a wide range of products including food, nonfood, world-class electronic appliances, home appliances, garments, footwear, health and beauty items at affordable prices.

The success of Grand Hypermarket is evident in the strong support by its loyal patrons, who through the various outlets of the retail chain spread across the GCC countries.



ICSK Senior Student tops JEE entrance examination

The Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK) Senior, is proud to share that Jade Lourdes Vaz, who passed out class 12 in March 2019 from ICSK Senior, has been declared the Goa state topper in the JEE [Joint Entrance Examination] held by NTA [National Testing Agency], in Goa.

She has bagged the first position in JEE Paper 2 [B.Arch] that comprises of Mathematics, Aptitude Test and Drawing. She secured a huge 98.7%. NTA widely known as the National Testing Agency is an Indian government agency that has been approved by the Union Council of Ministers and established in November 2017 to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions. AICTE, CBSE and UGC have been



given authorized responsibility to conduct eligibility examination to NTA. Jade passed out class 12 in the year 2019, from ICSK Senior. She hails from Goa. Her father is Mr. Benjamin Fransisco Vaz who works as an Accountant in Kuwait and mother is Emma Jovita Vaz, who is a Document Controller here in Kuwait.

She happens to be a hardworking and diligent student. The guidance and counseling she received from ICSK Senior also helped her to attain this triumph.

In the All India ranking she stands in the 3881st position out of the 1,4,4032 candidates who had appeared for the examination. She believes that sheer determination and hard work can make any difficult task easy.

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Vale Bob Hawke: A True Friend of Kuwait

BY JONATHAN GILBERT
Australian Ambassador
to the State of Kuwait

Robert James Lee Hawke, born on December 9, 1929, was the 23rd Prime Minister of Australia, serving in that office from March 1983 to December 1991. He is the third longest serving Prime Minister in Australian history.

Hawke was a true friend of Kuwait and was committed to the country's freedom, prosperity and success.

Soon after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Hawke spoke to members of the National Security Committee of Cabinet to discuss the situation and Australia's response.

On 10 August 1990, he announced Australia's decision to join the United States-led multinational force, enforcing UN sanctions on Iraqi trade

through the Gulf (and at times in the Red Sea).

Three days later, the Royal Australian Navy frigates, HMAS Darwin and HMAS Adelaide, sailed from Sydney for the Gulf, followed shortly afterward by the replenishment tanker HMAS Success.

Australia's deployment of naval ships to the multinational force was one of the first with the United States. It was to continue well after Kuwait's liberation on 26 February 1991 and involved over 1,800 Australian Defense personnel. Alongside the three warships, Australia also provided a supply vessel, four medical teams, air transportation and a mine clearance diving team.

Speaking at the time about Australia's decision to commit forces to the Gulf, Hawke told journalists "if we believe in the principle of rights of independent nations to be free and to



be free from naked aggression from their neighbors then we have to be prepared even at some risk to back up our beliefs with action".

Hawke – a close friend of US President George H W Bush – was also engaged in the diplomatic effort to convince other nations to join the multinational force to liberate Kuwait.

Marking the announcement of the ceasefire on 28 February 1991,

Hawke expressed his shared joy with Kuwaitis over the liberation of the country. He also reiterated Australia's commitment to values such as national self-determination, national sovereignty and the rule of law over the rule of force.

Following Kuwait's liberation, Hawke continued his relationship with the country. In 2010, he led the Australia Gulf Council Mission in a

visit to Kuwait, where he met with the former Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah.

Hawke was known for his great warmth, openness and sense of humor. He did many great things for Australia, including opening up the economy to make it among the most successful and competitive in the world.

He also left a wide impression mark on the global stage, particularly in regards to his efforts to forge closer ties between Australia and Asia and his work to end apartheid in South Africa.

Hawke passed away on 16 May 2019. A state memorial service will be held in Sydney on 14 June 2019.

For those wishing to pay their respects, an online condolence book is available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/pmc/condolences>

Tobacco

Hiding behind a smoke-screen

One of the biggest health threats that the world has ever faced comes not from deadly bacterial and viral diseases or parasitic infections, but from something that hides behind a smoke-screen — the deadly tobacco.

Since it became prevalent in the 1950s, smoking has single-handedly killed more people than the combined death toll from the two World Wars and the great Black Plague. An estimated 100 million lost their lives in the two World Wars, and reportedly another 150 million were decimated across Eurasia by the spread of plague in the mid- to late-14th century.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) smoking kills an estimated 8.2 million people each year. Even going by a conservative figure of five million deaths a year produces a death toll of 350 million deaths when extrapolated over the last 70 years that smoking has been prevalent.

WORLD
NO TOBACCO
3 DAY
31 MAY

More than 7 million of the annual deaths from smoking are the result of direct tobacco usage, another 1.2 million deaths are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. Tobacco is projected to kill over half of the 1.1 billion smokers living around the world ahead of their lifespan. With around 80 percent of smokers living in low- and middle-income countries, the burden of tobacco-related illness and death will be heaviest on countries that are least able to tackle the epidemic.

After being hounded out of much of the developed world, the tobacco industry is now aiming to spread its usage in poor developing countries. Using every tactics that they perfected over the span of a century in the developed world, the tobacco industry is now spreading its death and destruction in

developing countries. The lack of stringent rules on marketing and sales of tobacco products gives the industry a free-hand to ply their nefarious trade in poor countries.

In many developing countries, Big Tobacco uses its money power to buy political patronage that allows them to thwart anti-smoking campaigns and to obfuscate the strong evidence which points to the harms of tobacco on lung health and its implications directly for smokers and indirectly through second-hand smoke on non-smokers.

Every year the World Health Organization and global partners celebrate World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) on 31 May. The event is used to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure, and to discourage the use of tobacco in any form.

The theme for this year's WNTD, 'Tobacco and Lung Health' aims to focus on the negative impact that tobacco has on people's lung health, from cancer to chronic respiratory disease, and the fundamental role lungs play for the health and well-being of all people.

The campaign also serves as a call to action, advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption and engaging stakeholders across multiple sectors in the fight for tobacco control.

Lung cancer is one of deadly results of smoking tobacco — over two-thirds of all lung cancer deaths globally have been attributed to smoking tobacco. Second-hand smoke exposure at home or in the work place also increases risk of lung cancer.

Tobacco smoking is also the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a condition where the build-up of pus-filled mucus in the lungs results in a painful cough and agonizing breathing difficulties.

Across their life-course, infants exposed in-utero to tobacco smoke toxins, through maternal smoking or maternal exposure to second-hand smoke, frequently experience reduced lung growth and function.

Globally, an estimated 60, 000 children die before the age of 5 of lower respiratory infections caused by second-hand smoke. Those who live on into adulthood continue to suffer the health consequences of second-hand smoke exposure.

Another direct risk of smoking is tuberculosis (TB) which damages the lungs



and reduces lung function. People who smoke are twice as likely to fall ill with TB. Active TB, compounded by the damaging lung health effects of tobacco smoking, substantially increases risk of disability and death from respiratory failure. Tobacco smoke is also implicated in the poor quality of indoor air. Tobacco smoke contains over 7 000 chemicals, 69 of which are known to cause cancer. Though smoke may be invisible and odorless, it can linger in the air for up to five hours, putting those exposed at risk of lung cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and reduced lung function.

The good news is that quitting smoking can reduce the risk of lung cancer: after 10 years of quitting smoking, risk of lung cancer falls to about half that of a smoker.

The World No Tobacco Day 2019 campaign serves as an opportunity to engage stakeholders across sectors and empower countries around the world, especially developing nations, to fight the tobacco industry by strengthening the implementation of proven tobacco control measures contained in the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

As part of WNTD and in relation to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Kuwait continues to pursue health and environment policies to prevent the hazards of tobacco consumption. The country has also implemented various awareness programs to highlight the risks associated with tobacco

and the need to reduce its consumption.

Director of Information and Public Relations Department of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikha Al-Ibrahim said the theme of this year WNTD is an occasion to remind everybody of the adverse health and environment impacts of tobacco inhalation, as well as the economic hazards to people's livelihood.

Pointing out that Article 56 of Act 42/2014 of Kuwait's law on environment protection bans smoking in public transports and in closed areas except in designated places indoors, she said, "The EPA has embarked on an ambitious awareness plan, involving audiovisuals in mass media and on social media, to educate the public on the provisions of the law and the importance of curbing air pollution and combating smoking."

She added, "Collaborating with other state institutions and the private sector we were able to implement the law and impose fines on violators. Since the issuance of the law in 2014, nearly 3,600 individuals and institutions, including government bodies and shopping malls, have been fined for breaching the law."

Under the law, the value of fine, which ranges from KD50 to KD100, should be paid by the violator within a week of the citation or they could face interrogation by the public prosecution. She added that the EPA will continue to organize awareness programs on the risks of smoking in parallel with the campaigns against law violators

Ultrasound could herald new treatment for diabetes

Targeted ultrasound could be an effective, noninvasive, drug-free way to boost insulin levels in people with type 2 diabetes.

Beta cells — which are specialized cells in the pancreas — synthesize, store, and release insulin in response to the presence of sugar in the blood. This increased production helps keep levels of glucose in the blood within the normal range.

In people with diabetes, the pancreas produces too little insulin, which can lead to too much sugar in the blood that then causes damage to tissues and organs. Early on in the progression of diabetes, beta cells can become overworked, which causes insulin to build up inside. This buildup can be terminal for the beta cell. If more insulin-producing beta cells die, diabetes is exacerbated.

Certain drugs can help the beta cells release insulin, but these can be expensive and may become less effective over time. For

these reasons, researchers are keen to find other ways of promoting insulin release that do not involve drugs.

Researchers at George Washington University in the US are investigating whether ultrasound might provide a way forward. Ultrasound describes sound waves of a frequency above the level of human hearing that is often associated with scanning techniques. But ultrasound has also been used in treating kidney stones, prostate cancer, and it is even being considered as a treatment option for Parkinson's disease.

Earlier, scientists had shown that ultrasound can encourage cultured beta cells to release insulin, but it had not been tested on living animals. The researchers have now successfully used ultrasound to stimulate insulin release from beta cells in the pancreases of mice.

To investigate, they gave mice either



a control treatment or a single 5-minute exposure to ultrasound at the frequency of 1 megahertz. The researchers took blood samples immediately before and after the ultrasound or control session. The scientists found that the mice they treated with ultrasound had increased insulin production compared with the control mice. Also, more importantly, they found that there was no associated reduction in glucose levels; despite

a hike in insulin, glucose in the blood seemed untouched.

Scientists are continuing to refine their use of ultrasound on the pancreas, however, it remains complicated as the pancreas has a number of other roles in addition to producing insulin, such as the excretion of digestive enzymes and antagonistic hormones. It is possible that when the pancreas are stimulated they could release these biological products alongside insulin and lead to a range of other effects. Scientists are now investigating this potential problem in more detail.

Nevertheless the researchers are optimistic as they feel that through careful selection of ultrasound parameters, it could be possible to provide a safe, controlled, and targeted stimulation of insulin release from the pancreatic beta cells. Trials in humans are still a long way off.

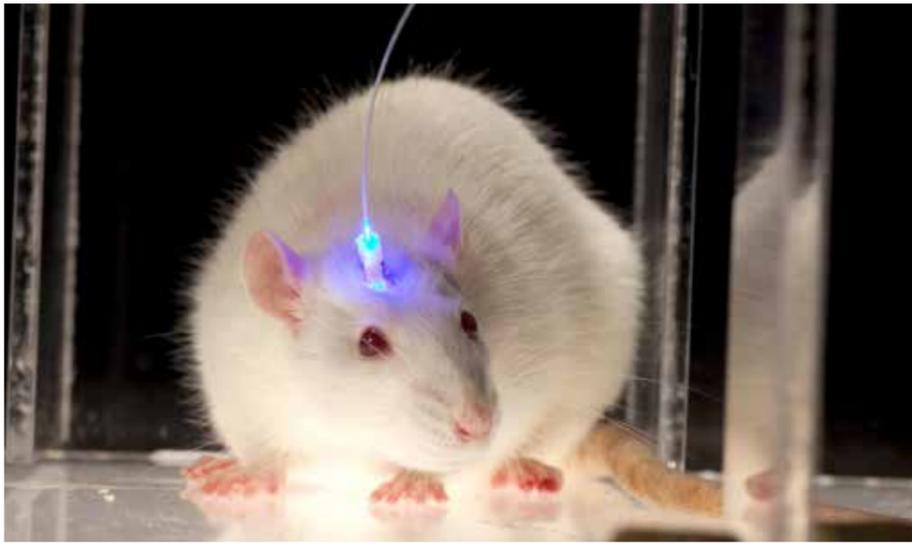
Using light to restore health

Optogenetics is a relatively new biological technique that uses specialized light on living tissue to control cells that have been genetically modified to express light-sensitive ion channels. Using a combination of techniques from optics and genetics researchers have been able to monitor and control the activities of individual cells, typically neurons (nerve cells) in living tissue — even within freely-moving animals — and to precisely measure these manipulation effects in real-time.

Groundwork for work in optogenetics was laid at the universities of Oxford, Stanford and at the University of Berlin. Using optogenetics scientists have been able to illuminate neural networks in the brains of various organisms that control behavior, sensation, and cognition, and provides researchers with incredible insight into behavior of cells.

Research is now ongoing in the use of optogenetics to treat blindness due to retinitis pigmentosa and advanced age-related macular degeneration, as well as chronic pain and host of neurological conditions such as depression, epilepsy, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

Optogenetics-based treatments offer many advantages over commonly used methods. For one, optogenetics allows the modulation of targeted cells compared to the drug based approach that cannot target cells specifically. Optogenetics also enables a much faster response, which can amount to mere milliseconds on any given time scale, whereas drug-based methods can take minutes or even hours to present a response. Additionally, most medications have side effects, while optogenetic-based treatment has so far not reported any side effects.



While the value of optogenetics as a research method is undeniable, there are still many hurdles to overcome, such as the potential risks of converting cells into light-sensitive ones. Public acceptance of such procedures may also be difficult to obtain due to ethical concerns. Moreover, to shine light onto the deeply embedded neural system requires invasive interventions such as surgery. Lastly, our understanding of many complex disorders is still incomplete and more sustained research investment will be required to find which circuits need to be targeted for the treatment of complex human disorders.

One complex area that has the potential to be treated with optogenetics is mental health

disorders such as depression, anxiety and stress. While there is an urgent need to effectively diagnose and treat anxiety disorders, research progress is hindered by poor understanding of how affected patients perceive threats and execute anxiety behaviors.

Despite more than five decades of behavioral research using rodent models, the cellular mechanisms underlying anxiety are still unclear, and the clinical outcomes of these efforts have been disappointing. Researchers at the College of Health and Life Sciences in Qatar, led by Dr. Mohammad Farhan are attempting to uncover general principles that govern anxiety, and how different animals (with different needs and brains) implement anxious behavior.

Simple test to reveal stress levels



Stress, often called 'the silent killer' because of its stealthy effects on everything from heart disease to mental health, has in the past proven difficult to measure. Now researchers at the University of Cincinnati in the US have developed a new test that can easily and simply measure common stress hormones using sweat, blood, urine or saliva.

Using ultraviolet light the researchers were able to accurately measure stress hormones in a drop of blood, sweat, urine or saliva. The device could measure multiple biomarkers in different body fluids making it an ideal tool for point-of-care diagnostics.

The device has widespread applications, and the research team hopes to eventually turn their ideas into a simple device that patients can use at home to monitor various aspects of their health.

Many physical ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure and neurological or psychological disorders can be traced back to stress that the patient has gone through.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Global Consequences of a Sino-American Cold War



NOURIEL ROUBINI

CEO of Roubini Macro Associates and Professor of Economics at the Stern School of Business, NYU.

A few years ago, as part of a Western delegation to China, I met President Xi Jinping in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. When addressing us, Xi argued that China's rise would be peaceful, and that other countries — namely, the United States — need not worry about the 'Thucydides Trap', so named for the Greek historian who chronicled how Sparta's fear of a rising Athens made war between the two inevitable. In his 2017 book *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?*, Harvard University's Graham Allison examines 16 earlier rivalries between an emerging and an established power, and finds that 12 of them led to war. No doubt, Xi wanted us to focus on the remaining four.

Despite the mutual awareness of the Thucydides Trap, and the recognition that history is not deterministic, China and the US seem to be falling into it anyway. Though a hot war between the world's two major powers still seems far-fetched, a cold war is becoming more likely.

The US blames China for the current tensions. Since joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, China has reaped



the benefits of the global trading and investment system, while failing to meet its obligations and free riding on its rules. According to the US, China has gained an unfair advantage through intellectual-property theft, forced technology transfers, subsidies for domestic firms, and other instruments of state capitalism. At the same time, its government is becoming

increasingly authoritarian, transforming China into an Orwellian surveillance state.

For their part, the Chinese suspect that the US's real goal is to prevent them from rising any further or projecting legitimate power and influence abroad. In their view, it is only reasonable that the world's second-largest economy (by GDP) would seek to expand its presence on the world stage. And leaders would argue that their regime has improved the material welfare of 1.4 billion Chinese far more than the West's gridlocked political systems ever could.

Regardless of which side has the stronger argument, the escalation of economic, trade, technological, and geopolitical tensions may have been inevitable. What started as a trade war now threatens to escalate into a permanent state of mutual animosity. This is reflected in the Trump administration's National Security Strategy, which deems China a strategic 'competitor' that should be contained on all fronts.

Accordingly, the US is sharply restricting Chinese foreign direct investment in sensitive sectors, and pursuing other actions to ensure Western dominance in strategic industries such as artificial intelligence and 5G. It is pressuring partners and allies not to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, China's massive program to build infrastructure projects across the Eurasian landmass. And it is increasing US Navy patrols in the East and South China Seas, where China has grown more aggressive in asserting its dubious territorial claims.

The global consequences of a Sino-American cold war would be even more severe than those of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. Whereas the Soviet Union was a declining power with a failing economic model, China will soon become the world's largest economy, and will continue to grow from there. Moreover, the US and the Soviet Union traded very little with each other, whereas China is fully integrated in the global trading and investment system, and deeply intertwined with the US, in particular.

A full-scale cold war thus could trigger a new stage of de-globalization, or at least a division of the global economy into two incompatible economic blocs. In either scenario, trade in goods, services, capital, labor, technology, and data would be

severely restricted, and the digital realm would become a 'splinternet', wherein Western and Chinese nodes would not connect to one another. Now that the US has imposed sanctions on ZTE and Huawei, China will be scrambling to ensure that its tech giants can source essential inputs domestically, or at least from friendly trade partners that are not dependent on the US.

In this balkanized world, China and the US will both expect all other countries to pick a side, while most governments will try to thread the needle of maintaining good economic ties with both. After all, many US allies now do more business (in terms of trade and investment) with China than they do with America.

Yet in a future economy where China and the US separately control access to crucial technologies such as AI and 5G, the middle ground will most likely become uninhabitable. Everyone will have to choose, and the world may well enter a long process of de-globalization.

“ In a future economy where China and the US separately control access to crucial technologies such as AI and 5G, the middle ground will most likely become uninhabitable. ”

Whatever happens, the Sino-American relationship will be the key geopolitical issue of this century. Some degree of rivalry is inevitable. But, ideally, both sides would manage it constructively, allowing for cooperation on some issues and healthy competition on others. In effect, China and the US would create a new international order, based on the recognition that the (inevitably) rising new power should be granted a role in shaping global rules and institutions.

If the relationship is mismanaged — with the US trying to derail China's development and contain its rise, and China aggressively projecting its power in Asia and around the world — a full-scale cold war will ensue, and a hot one (or a series of proxy wars) cannot be ruled out. In the twenty-first century, the Thucydides Trap would swallow not just the US and China, but the entire world.

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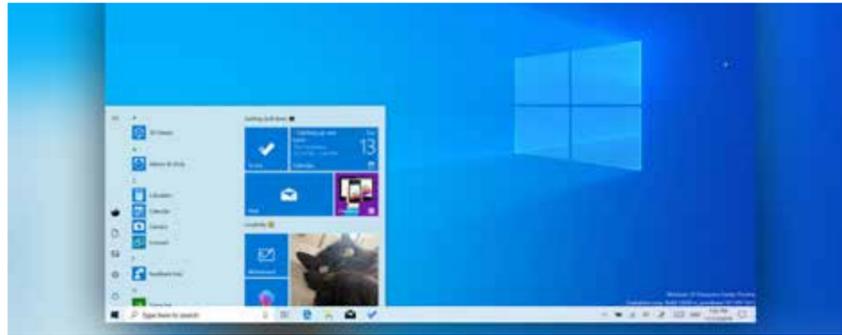
New features on Windows May 2019 update

The latest iteration of Windows 10, the May 2019 update is now being rolled out to customers worldwide. After extensive testing to avoid glitches that have bogged down previous updates, Microsoft is launching the May 2019 Update with a host of new features and some minor tweaks. Here is a look at some of the best of May 2019 update.

Lighter theme: A new light theme is the biggest visual change to Windows 10. It is basically a white version of the current black theme that many people use in Windows 10. While Windows 10's dark mode is not always consistent throughout the operating system, the white theme is fairly well-executed due to a lot of apps and areas using white backgrounds as standard.

Windows Sandbox: Windows 10 is getting a new Windows Sandbox feature so users can avoid running an unknown .exe on their PC. Windows Sandbox creates a temporary desktop environment to check out a particular app without running it inside the regular computer settings, and without the need for the machine to support a separate virtual machine. The sandbox securely isolates a particular app and once you are finished testing the app the entire sandbox is deleted.

Uninstall more built-in apps: Microsoft has added more built-in apps that users can now remove based on their preference. For



instance, you can now throw out apps like Groove Music, Mail / Calendar, Movies & TV, Calculator, the new Paint 3D app, and the 3D viewer. However, you will still not be able to easily remove some apps like Camera or Edge.

Cortana and Search separated: If you are not a fan of the Cortana digital assistant in Windows 10, then you will be pleased to know that Microsoft has now decoupled Cortana from Search in the task bar. Now you can type in the search box to find documents and files without embarrassing yourself in an office environment by asking your PC to find them for you.

The new search interface also includes your top-used apps, recent activities, and files, with options to filter by apps, documents, email, and web results. Search is still largely the

same, with the exception of now searching across all files on a machine.

Cleaner Start Menu: Microsoft has made the Start Menu a whole lot less cluttered with the latest update by cutting the number of pinned apps on the Start Menu and grouping them differently. This means all the bloatware that is usually pinned by default is grouped into a single section that you can quickly unpin. Unfortunately, you will only see this new Start Menu layout if you create a new user account or you are using a fresh Windows 10 PC.

Brightness slider: Available in the notification center, the slider lets you quickly adjust screen brightness. It replaces the tile that simply let you cycle through different levels of screen brightness. If you really want

33 percent screen brightness, you can do that now with a simple slide.

Pause updates: Microsoft has finally listened to Windows 10 users and added much more control over how updates are triggered. All Windows 10 users will now be able to pause updates, and Microsoft is even letting people choose when to install the latest major version. Windows 10 users will be able to simply stay on an existing version and continue to receive monthly security updates, avoiding the latest feature update.

Microsoft is also changing the way it allocates space for Windows updates. Some updates can fail to install if there is not enough free space, so Microsoft is now reserving around 7GB of disk space to Windows Update. This should mean that devices with more limited storage always get the latest security and feature updates without issues.

Sign in without password: In a bid to reduce our reliance on passwords, Microsoft is pushing Microsoft Accounts that do not have passwords. You can now set up and sign in to a Windows 10 PC with just a phone number on a Microsoft Account. Simply enter a phone number as the username, and a code will be sent to your mobile number to initiate a login. Once Windows 10 is logged in, you can then use Windows Hello or even a PIN to log in to your PC without ever using a password.

GCC and ASEAN: A growing friendship

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We need to engage together to strengthen our relations and encourage more people to people contacts," he said, pointing out that Kuwait is an important country in the region and continues to play a vital role in the United Nations Security Council by promoting peace and stability in the world,

He further emphasised on the crucial role that Kuwait can play in bridging the gap between the developed and developing countries while also promoting UN reform. He extended his gratitude to Kuwait government for hosting the secretariat of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) that is an important forum to get countries in Asia to cooperate. Srisamoot said Kuwaiti investments in the ASEAN bloc were significant and the region provided many investment opportunities from transportation and logistics, to hospitality and many more. The potential to open business in the region is substantial as ASEAN countries also have an abundance of several natural resources.

The deputy permanent secretary also praised the long period of cooperation between the Gulf states which was established in the nineties and said there was a lot of potential to further enhance this relationship. "The Gulf states are a major source of energy and the ASEAN region is an important source of agriculture and also tourism. We need to maintain close cooperation between these two important blocs and continue to have dialogue on global issues," he pointed out.

He further noted that the Gulf states and ASEAN are like minded people. "We share similar views on the global agenda and multilateral issues such as peace and prosperity, as well as economic development, so we need to engage together. The GCC is also an important centre for a lot of international meetings.

On Saudi Arabia he said relations were getting better and there were high level delegation visits. "Saudi Arabia is an important country in the region and hence it was important to engage on a positive level," he noted

As chairman of the ASEAN for 2019, Thailand is promoting the theme of 'Advancing Partnership for Sustainability', which is main agenda Thailand wants to drive during its chairmanship. Elaborating on this the deputy permanent secretary said that the three main elements were: To develop

cooperation with our external partners, To be more future oriented - that is prepare the people for the future challenges and external environment and re-educate people, whether its climate change or the digital revolution, and

Sustainable Development, which means that all the tasks such as education, climate change etc will be integrated in order for the future to be sustained.

Srisamoot noted that at present ASEAN was relatively peaceful as there was a lot of cooperation between member states and sustainable economic growth in the region. But he pointed out that challenges remain, especially due to superpower rivalry in the region.

He said competition in terms of ideology and promotion of free Indo-Pacific trade were some of the issues that needed to be addressed. Trying to attract US interests in the Asia Pacific region in terms of encouraging trade were necessary, as was the need to address certain disputes in the region, such as the South China Sea.

As a political grouping ASEAN is well respected and accepted by all powers for their endeavours to promote regional and international cooperation. "Everybody accepts the mediating role by ASEAN and as a middle power we provide a platform," he pointed out

ASEAN has also fully supported the Rohingya refugees return to their homeland and sought an international needs assessment team to prepare for their repatriation and coordinate with Myanmar so when the refugees return to their homeland, the right environment is created for education and employment opportunities.

Since its founding in the seventies, ASEAN members have been able to accelerate their economic growth, social progress, cultural development, promote regional peace and stability, and maintain beneficial cooperation.

The main achievement of ASEAN has been the maintenance of an uninterrupted period of peace and stability during which the individual Member Countries have been able to concentrate on promoting rapid and sustained economic growth and modernization. The dynamism of the Southeast Asian economies is something many countries would like to acquire for themselves. For about 25 years from 1970 to 1995, ASEAN's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 7.0 percent. Today, Southeast Asia has a total market of about 640 million people and a combined GDP of more than US\$2.9 trillion.

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