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250 Fils

Expelling expatriates may not be the answer to Kuwait's deep economic malaise



THE TIMES REPORT

Over the past 15 years the population of Kuwait has more than doubled from 2.2 million in 2005 to 4.8 million at the start of 2020. During this period, the number of citizens grew by 63 percent, from 860,000 to 1.4 million, while expatriates surged by 162 percent, from 1.3 million to 3.4 million. The skewed population growth is certainly a cause for concern to the state, but is expelling expatriates the answer?

On 20 October, in its one-day supplementary fifth session for the 15th legislative term, the



parliament passed a series of laws, including one on reducing the number of expatriates in the country. Expatriates, who currently form an

overwhelming 70 percent of Kuwait's total population of 4.8 million, are understandably concerned.

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Women in Diplomacy

Women in Diplomacy is a feature that highlights women diplomats in Kuwait, as well as women who use informal 'hearts and minds' diplomacy to further strengthen relations between two countries. Through a series of interviews with these dynamic women in diplomacy, The Times Kuwait will provide readers with valuable insights and glimpses into their lives as they go about making a difference in relations between countries. In this issue **Ameera Alhassan**, UNHPM GCC Kuwait, answers questions from The Times Kuwait in an exclusive interview.



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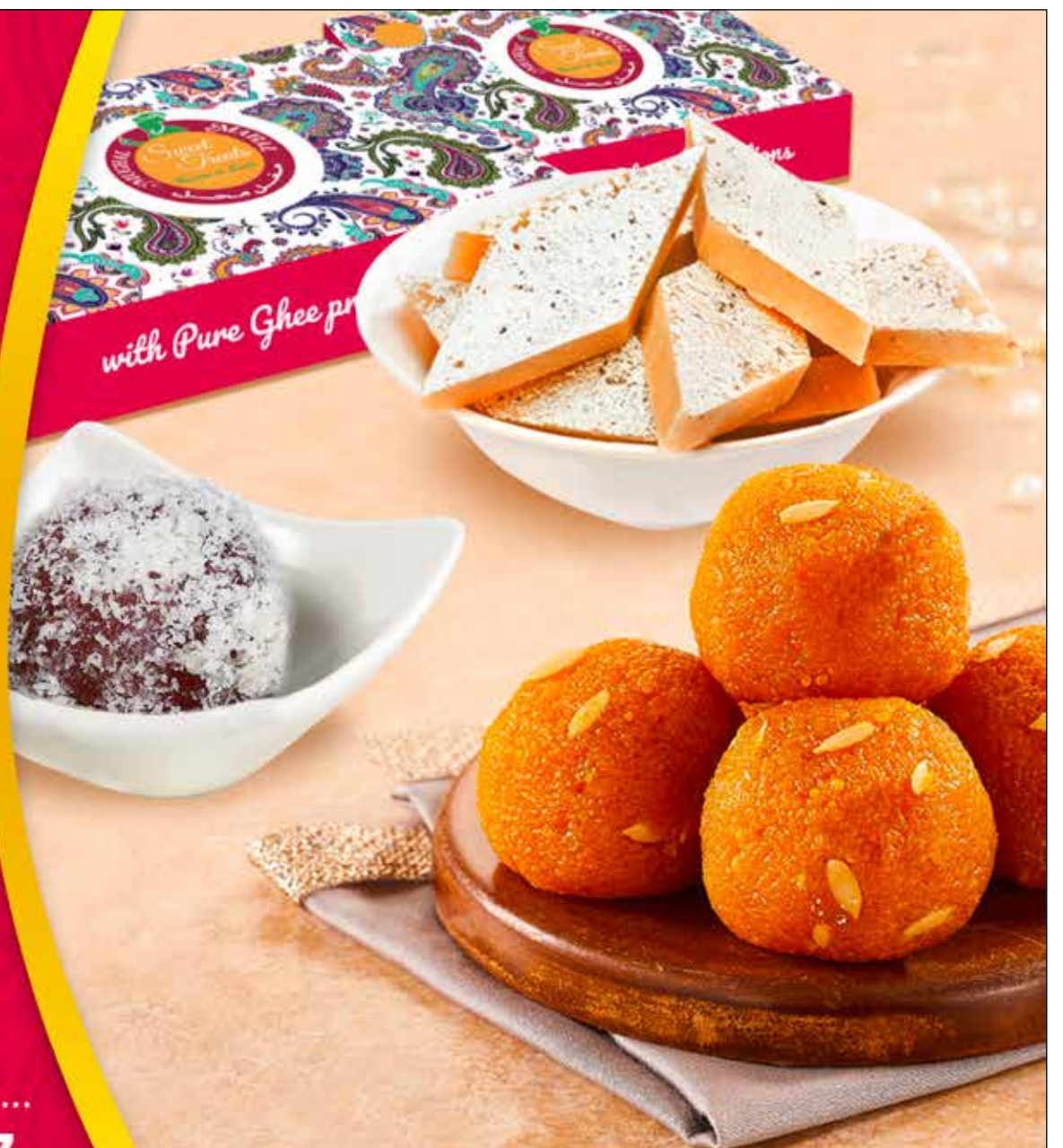


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Maid-recruitment offices claim multi-million dinar losses



Last week several owners of domestic workers recruitment offices staged a sit-in protest in front of the Ministry of Health (MoH) building to highlight their plight and request the authorities to restart the maid recruitment process. The owners were demanding that the MoH give necessary health permissions to allow the entry of

domestic helpers to the country, and thus enable recruitment offices to once again resume their business of bringing in maids from abroad.

The owners said that there were over 420 recruitment offices in the country, and each office was suffering on average around KD2,000 per month in expenses. They pointed out that though their business activity was suspended they still had to pay for rents, salaries of employees, car installments, foodstuffs for housing and miscellaneous other items. They noted that their total losses, since the start of COVID-19 pandemic more than eight months ago, was now nearly KD7 million.

Besides the financial plight from the suspension of their business activity, the halting of recruitment had also impacted many Kuwaiti families who were in urgent need of domestic helpers, said

the owners. Also, there were families with elderly, people with special needs, and small children who were now adversely affected by the suspension of entry visas of domestic workers. These families had to either forego the hiring of maids for now, or resort to hiring illegal domestic workers at exorbitant prices from the black market, where a large number of residency and labor law violators were available to work as domestic helpers.

They added that the sit-in protest was intended to deliver a message to the authorities, and that if no action was taken they would have to resort to legal measures. The owners said they had conveyed their genuine demands to the authorities and hoped for a speedy resolution to their problem.

Some of the demands listed by owners include restarting the issuing of

entry visas and facilitating the entry of domestic workers to the country, in line with mandated health requirements. They even offered to allocate special places for a two-week quarantine period for the maids on arrival in the country. To ensure the safe entry and employment of domestic workers, the owners requested a meeting with members of the pandemic health committee to plan and coordinate the process.

Pointing out that some Gulf countries have already permitted entry of domestic workers, the office owners emphasized the need to find alternative solutions to recruiting domestic workers, especially since the coronavirus crisis may extend for a long time. They added that the country must adapt to the situation, and in line with health protocols begin planning for a gradual return to normal life.

Book launch

Joy Alukkas launches 'A Glittering Success Story'



A well-crafted coffee table book titled 'A Glittering Success Story' about the success of Joy Alukkas, one of the leading India-based jewelry groups in Kuwait, was presented by Vinod Kumar, the Kuwait showroom manager of Joy Alukkas to the Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, Reaven D'Souza.

The book chronicles the group's founder Joy Alukkas and the phenomenal growth of the group from a small jewelry business in the Indian state of Kerala to a global brand with over 150 showrooms spread across 11 nations. The growth story spanning over 33 years is an inspiring reading and deserves creditable applause.

Final repatriation flight to Philippines takes off

RICKY LAXA
STAFF WRITER

The final chartered repatriation flight to Philippines departed on the morning of 25 October with 228 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) on board

Officials from the Philippines Embassy, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) were at the airport to bid farewell to the departing passengers.

Sol Al Failakawi, Administrative Officer and Translator from POLO and OWWA said that 99 passengers were arranged POLO OWWA and 30 by the Philippine Embassy, all of whom were on regular flights. The rest of the passengers were OFWs who had decided to return home for good, and some had to return home due to emergency situations. There were no deportees in the flight.

Al-Falakawi also pointed out that, "Kuwait Airways will hopefully open its services to the Philippines in November and passengers will then be able to avail of regular flights at normal rates." For his part, Welfare Officer at the Philippines embassy Atty. Llewelyn Perez added that the number of OFWs returning home for good have declined and this is a good sign that many, if not the majority, have already assumed new jobs or have restarted with their work schedules.



Chartered flights to the Philippines were started in September and there have been 19 flights so far. The flights have been organized by the Philippine Embassy, POLO and OWWA to provide assistance and support to OFWs who have no financial capacity to return home. The flights provided free passage for deportees and women in shelter awaiting the repatriation process. About 6,000 OFWs have returned to the Philippines through normal as well as 'Mercy' flights, said the welfare officer.

OFWs have expressed gratitude to POLO, OWWA and Philippine Embassy for the efforts made to ensure their safe return to the Philippines. On the other hand, the ban on passengers arriving directly from 34 countries, including the Philippines, has left thousands of Filipinos stranded in their country hoping to return and resume their jobs in Kuwait.

Egyptian hacker of KUNA sentenced

An Egyptian expatriate in Kuwait has been sentenced to seven years in prison followed by deportation for hacking into the Twitter account of state news agency KUNA, and publishing false news that jeopardized national security.

The man allegedly hacked into the Twitter account of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) and published a tweet that the United States had decided to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. The tweet, published on 8 January, noted that the Commander of US forces in Kuwait had informed the Ministry of Defense of the US intention to immediately begin withdrawing troops from the country.

The tweet, which was published after an

American drone killed top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad at the start of the year, was intended to show that the US troops were being withdrawn fearing reprisals from Iran.

The news was promptly denied by Kuwait, with government spokesman Tareq Al-Mazrem, issuing a statement saying that the Twitter account of the country's official news agency had been hacked.

State investigative agencies quickly opened a file on the security breach and data analysis soon led them to the Egyptian expatriate who was apprehended in February and the case was handed over to the prosecution for further legal action.

MoE refuses to renew residences of hundreds of staff

Around 200 Egyptian teachers and administrators whose residency permits had expired while they were stranded outside Kuwait, are unable to return as the Ministry of Education (MoE) has refused to renew their residences.

The teachers and administrative staff are reported to have sent letters requesting to renew their residences to Kuwait's embassy in Cairo. The embassy then forwarded these letters to the MoE requesting further action. However, the ministry has maintained that



renewing expired residences of staff stranded abroad is not within its purview. Sources say that the decision to renew the expired residences of expatriates stranded abroad rests solely with the Ministry of Interior.

Working towards change enhances my career in the UN

Ameera Al Hassan, with a (PhD) in Sustainable Architecture and Role of Policy Making and Endusers (Newcastle University) is the first Kuwaiti woman leading a UN programme in Kuwait and GCC. As the UN Habitat Programme Manager for the region Ameera is creating change and tangible results. Soft spoken and determined Ameera spoke to The Times Kuwait managing editor about her work and role for a better future.

BY REAVEN D'SOUZA
MANAGING EDITOR

Can u please tell us a little bit about your background and how did you decide into working for the United Nations

My experience as sustainability expert and my Phd research theme enabled me to work efficiently for the UN-Habitat which is a United Nation program mandated in issues pertaining Sustainable Urban Development; United Nations Human



Settlement Program Habitat, UN-Habitat.

The UN-Habitat aims at helping cities dwellers to create a better urban future in their cities realizing Agenda2030 seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

My long experience on ways to implement sustainable development goals at a personal and societal level inside our cities leading for achieving environmental, economic and social sustainability encouraged me to join UN-Habitat at first on 2009 when I was a PhD reader as an intern, and through out the years until present time I have worked to enrich my experience on the UN rules and regulations.

What are the responsibilities you undertook so far

My roles and responsibilities varied throughout the past decade since I joined UNH in 2009 until I was officially appointed as UN Habitat Program Manager and Analyst for the GCC region in Kuwait on 2019. I was tasked to do different assignments as years progressed starting from corresponding with our stakeholders inside and outside Kuwait, preparation process of the National Reports of the GCC countries, capacity building activities at Gulf and Arab regional level, reaching to donors for IDPs and refugees in the region, preparation and carrying out conferences and ministerial meetings, activities designed and conducted for people with special needs, youth and women and other activities related to achieving SDG11 designed for experts at Gulf states and Arab region.

What challenges you faced as a woman and how easy/difficult do you think women are able to work in this profession

I believe as the first Kuwaiti woman leading a UN program in Kuwait, my main challenge is carrying out a project aiming to mitigate the effect of climate change and achieving sustainable urban development in Kuwait and other Gulf countries.

Gender equality is yet to be achieved on leadership level in the UN organisations. We still have a long way to walk since women are less than men in terms of both number and wages. Highly educated women do not have same opportunity as highly educated men. Moreover, my challenge is leaving a legacy behind for Gulf women to follow as Gulf women are very low in number in the UN system, not because of lack of qualification, but in fact because they need to step forward and take action. Besides that, as the world is facing climate change effect we need to implement projects that aim at mitigating the effect of climate change on the Gulf states as well as other Arab countries. This includes zero energy, improving energy efficiency products, solid waste management. We need to eliminate the effect of climate change on the public health, therefore, as I see it, it is my duty to encourage people to plant more and more trees on each passing day to contribute in improving the general environment. There is a Chinese proverb; the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago! This shows you how important the tree is, and by planting the open public



spaces we are in fact contributing in both the physical and psychological health of the general public.

With Covid-19 response plan, a new challenge has risen as women make up 75% of the medical and human aids; helping at societal and state level which maintaining healthy family atmosphere became a priority as well as an essential element for survival..

What do you enjoy most working for the United Nations

Creating change and tangible results is the most joyful thing in working for the UN... You commence a project aiming at changing a situation and once you are done, you look back to it with total pride and sense of achievement. Seeing people laugh happily when they receive their newly refurbished houses is incredibly fun. I enjoy meeting up with new people at different levels from presidents of states to prime ministers, ministers and members of the public and vulnerable people and learning from them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

“ I believe as the first Kuwaiti woman leading a UN program in Kuwait, my main challenge is carrying out a project aiming to mitigate the effect of climate change and achieving sustainable urban development in Kuwait and other Gulf countries. ”



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Not all residency law violators are alike

Authorities at the Ministry of Interior (Mol) responsible for dealing with residency visa violators are reported to be in a quandary, as there are now two categories of violators with each requiring separate penalties, prosecution procedures and type of deportation.

The two categories of residency law offenders are those who violated the law prior to 2019, and those who did so from 2019 till now. The number of violators in the first category are estimated to number around 50,000, while those who violated the residency law since the start of 2019 are said to be about 90,000.

The case of offenders in the second

category requires a different approach to those in the first category, as these are people who did not take advantage of the amnesty granted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh in late March of this year. They chose not to avail of the liberal terms of the last amnesty, despite it allowing them to leave the country without paying any fines and to leave at the expense of the state.

While the offenders of 2019 only had a deadline to leave the country safely without any possibility to amend their legal status, the pre-2019 violators were given many opportunities to amend their legal status by paying the fines owed

and applying for a valid residency in the country. They also failed to take advantage of the amnesty period. Informed sources say the issue of handling residency visa violators has become too complex, and that it needs a new and targeted strategy supervised by senior specialized security officials and to develop radical solutions to end this phenomena permanently.

Despite there being a full prosecution plan to tackle all violators and rid the country of illegal residents, it has not been implemented so far. The concerned Mol departments are said to be awaiting the green light from the higher authorities, which is still forthcoming.



In the meantime, violators from both categories can no longer rectify their legal status by paying fines, so they remain in limbo as prosecution procedures proceed against them at a slow pace.



Ambassador of Romania to Kuwait H.E. Daniel Tanase visited The Times Kuwait last week and met with Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza. Wide ranging issues were discussed and shared on various subjects related to local and regional developments.

Public support for Mobile ID grows

More and more people in the country are turning to the mobile ID app from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI). According to reports, the Authority now receives on average 5,000 requests each day, and more than 800,000 citizens and expatriates have already been registered on the app so far.

Sources at PACI confirmed the figures and said that the app was receiving a favorable response from the public, with no issues being reported, especially following an upgrade of the system that has cleared early glitches and now allows the smartphone app to interact seamlessly with advanced systems of government and private agencies. Earlier there were complaints of repeated error messages appearing on the phone when attempting to register on the app, especially while updating passport details or personal information. In order to rectify the errors, the concerned person had to request clarification and receive attestation from the Ministry of Interior. The upgraded version of the app has overcome most of these drawbacks, said PACI.



On the issue of continued delay in issuing civil ID cards, the sources said that this was due to the large number of pending ID card requests, with many cards remaining unclaimed by owners for long periods and thereby occupying storage in the machines.

The source added that the delay in issuing cards would end once plans to deliver civil ID cards to homes was implemented by mid-November, with priority being given initially for citizens and then for the expatriate population.

Britain appoints Belinda Lewis as its ambassador to Kuwait

Belinda Lewis was appointed as Britain's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, to succeed Michael Davenport. In a statement, the British Foreign Office said that Ambassador Lewis will officially assume her duties as of next April, noting that the new ambassador has extended governmental and diplomatic experience.

It pointed out that Ambassador Lewis held several positions in the Ministries of Information, Culture, Justice and the Borders Authority of the Interior, as well as her diplomatic positions in the British missions in the United States, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, before being



appointed in the last two years as Director of the International Human Resources Department.

Court squashes eviction of tenant defaulting on rent

The Rent Department of the Supreme Court, headed by Counselor Ahmed Al-Dehaishi, squashed the eviction notice that a building owner had sent to a tenant for not paying rent for the first six months of the year.

In its ruling the court cited the exceptional circumstances brought on by the coronavirus pandemic that prevailed during the period and that it could not have been foreseen by the tenant. The court also pointed out that the authorities had introduced curfews and lockdowns as preventive measures and this impacted the tenants ability to carry out his business activity

Under these circumstances, the court said the rent obligation in the lease contract for the apartment had become a burden for the tenant. Taking into consideration that the tenant had requested the owner for a reduction in rent, and after weighing the interests of both parties, the court also ruled that the rent paid



by the tenant be cut in half.

While the judgment issued in the first instance from the court is subject to appeal, it is worth highlighting that Article 198 of the Civil Code says that prevailing exceptional circumstances can be taken into consideration while passing a judgement.

Painting gifted to UNSG to mark the celebration of UN75

President of the Human Rights Diwan, Ambassador Jassim Al-mubarak, presented a painting by a renowned Kuwaiti Artist, Mohamed Qamber to the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General.

The gift was to mark the occasion of UN75 day as it represents the spirit of the UN Charter after 75 years, which supports endeavors towards peace, freedom, equality, and prosperity.



Indian embassy launches comprehensive feedback form in multiple Indian languages

As part of its efforts to get suggestions to improve the consular, labour and community welfare services being offered at the Indian Embassy and at its three passport centers, the Embassy has introduced a comprehensive feedback form.

The printed forms are available at the Embassy and at the three passport centers. These forms are now available in multiple Indian languages. Additional languages will be added shortly.

All are advised to complete the forms and deposit it in the boxes kept prominently at the Embassy reception and passport centers.

These could also be forwarded to community.kuwait@mea.gov.in and amboff.kuwa@mea.gov.in.

Citizens complain expatriates make Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh unlivable

Poor infrastructure, dearth of services, lack of security and stability, all arising from the huge number of expatriates in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, has made the area unlivable for them, say many citizens who currently reside there.

The citizens complained that the en masse movement of expatriates, especially bachelors, many of whom moved into the area after being evicted or due to stringent vigilance by authorities in other areas, such as Khaitan, Abbasiya and Al-Hassawi, have made living in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh unbearable for them.

"While we appreciate the importance of expatriates in the country, living in close proximity to them is impossible. There are differences in customs, traditions and

even in religions, and it is not possible to feel safe and secure in an area where bachelors are now present on every street in large numbers," said one citizen living in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. He added that the government has to move quickly to remedy the situation before it is too late and most Kuwaiti families are forced to vacate the area.

Another citizen admitted that one reason for the increase in expatriates is because some citizens have illegally rented out their government provided housing to bachelors or to groups of families that have led to overcrowding. "The area has about 550 houses, but because some people have rented it out to expatriates, there are many bachelors, or four or five families, living together in each rented

house." He noted that the large population concentrated in a small area leaves the infrastructure and services struggling to cope with the sudden influx of people.

"We lack proper water supply and sanitation, gutters are overflowing, garbage lies uncollected for days, and our streets are lined with potholes and blocked by parked vehicles. All of this is in addition to the increased insecurity, increasing thefts, robberies, bootlegging, make-shift markets and deviant behavior by some, arising from having such a large number of expatriates in the area," observed another citizen.

Pointing out that many citizens in the area are now feeling like strangers in their own country, he warned that, unless the government takes immediate



remedial action, citizens would be forced to abandon the area, and that with the number of citizens dwindling the area could soon be swamped by expatriates.



Oncost announces winners of exciting membership draw campaign

Oncost, Kuwait's leading family grocer, launched its weekly membership draw campaign offering a variety of attractive prizes to customers who have joined their exclusive membership program, and shop at their various stores.

Following the first draw, a felicitation ceremony was held at its Al Qurain store on 26 October to announce the first group of 25 winners of the cash prizes. The first place winner is Khaledah Alnaser, who received KD 1000, second place is Mohammad Golam, who won KD500, and third place is Mohammad Jahangheer with KD250. The remaining winners will be presented a cash prize of KD100 and

KD50 each.

A small gathering was present on the occasion with adherence to health ministry instructions including social distancing. Mr. Saleh Al-Tunaib CEO, Oncost thanked the customers for helping their brand to grow, and for being loyal patrons. Mr. Remesh Anandadas, COO also thanked all the valued customers for their valuable support, especially while Oncost is launching their exciting membership draw campaign.

During the campaign customers who shop at any Oncost stores are entitled to enter the draw on every KD 5/- worth of their purchase. Winners, chosen from customers who are Oncost



members, will be picked every week from an electronic draw to receive up to KD 3,000 in cash. The campaign is ongoing till 31st of December 2020, and the last date to redeem your cash

prize is on the 30th of January, 2021.

This campaign further rewards members of Oncost's Membership Program, which was launched on the 1st of January, 2018. Members can take

advantage of up to 4 percent cash back on their purchases made during their membership period. The Membership Program seeks to reward members for their loyalty to the brand, in addition to providing them with a large range of products at very cost-effective prices.

Members can also enroll in the family program, taking advantage of additional savings and other privileges including special offers year-round.

Oncost is your ultimate one-stop shopping destination for its customer-centric approach that ensures its patrons receive additional value when shopping at its stores that offers a range of high quality products at competitive prices.



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- New and existing customers are eligible
- Plus, benefit from the 'Buy 1 Get 1 Free' VOX Cinemas ticket offer

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Thought “ for the week

If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.

– Napoleon Hill

Easy food swaps for better nutrition



Good nutrition is not about perfection. Rather, healthy eating is about balance and consistency, and making healthier choices when you can. In fact, a closer look at commonly eaten foods will reveal that it is easy to swap many of our staple foods for healthier options, boosting our overall nutritional intake while basically eating the same thing.

So if healthy eating needs to be as easy as possible in your home, here are some of the easiest nutrient-rich food swaps you can make.

White bread for sourdough: Bread is a staple at many a barbecue or picnic, but easy-to-grab baguettes and flat breads are inevitably made from refined white flour. Unlike wholegrain and wholemeal varieties of bread, white bread is digested relatively quickly, resulting in fluctuating blood glucose levels, and lacking the dietary fibre that will help to keep you full and satisfied after eating. Wholegrain and wholemeal bread, cracker and loaves are much better options nutritionally or if the family prefers white bread, opt for sourdough. The process in which sourdough is made helps to reduce the glycaemic index of the bread, meaning that it helps to keep blood glucose levels much more controlled than traditional white bread.

Dips for hummus: A quick scan of the ingredient list of a commercial dip will likely reveal a product that is based on vegetable oil and contains up to 35 percent fat. Vegetable-based dips including hummus and tzatziki are much better options nutritionally – especially home-made varieties in which you can control the ingredients and opt for more

vegetables, legumes and extra virgin olive oil.

Crackers for veggie sticks: There is a wide range of crackers and crispbreads in supermarkets and while wholegrain, rye and wafer varieties are all relatively light options to serve with dips and cheese, you can't go past vegetable sticks or crudities as a nutrient-rich alternative to crackers. Free of kilojoules and packed with dietary fibre and vitamins and minerals, you will be surprised how many extra vegetables people eat when they are the default munching option.

Soft cheese for goat's cheese: With your favourite brie or camembert clocking in at 30-35 percent fat, it can be easy to overeat rich, flavoursome cheese. On the other hand, the growing range of white, soft cheeses such as marinated feta, goat's cheese and even cottage cheese means there are plenty of lighter, lower energy options. Goat's cheese, for example, contains as little as 15 percent fat, and portions can be easily contained as it is easy to spread and dip.

Potato chips for popcorn: While potato and corn chips appear to be relatively simple foods made with minimal ingredients – corn or potato, oil and salt – the reality is that refined starch cooked at high temperatures with processed vegetable oil creates a highly processed, carbohydrate-rich food that is digested very quickly. In addition, corn and potato chips generally contain 20-30 percent fat, and are easy to overeat. Popcorn on the other hand is a fibre-rich wholegrain with a fraction of the salt, fat and energy of corn and potato chips, making it the perfect picnic or party swap when you want something to munch on.

RECIPE

BREAD UPMA



Bread is usually the base for regular sandwiches or as toast for breakfast. Here I show you a breakfast variation called Bread Upma. This simple and delicious recipe will ensure your breakfasts are never the same again.

Ingredients

- 6-8 slices of bread (you can use brown or multigrain)
- 1/2 cup onion (finely chopped)
- 2 tbsp carrots (finely chopped)
- 1/4 cup tomatoes (finely chopped)
- 5-6 curry leaves
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp chilli (finely chopped)
- 1/4 cup capsicum (finely chopped)
- 2 tsp butter
- 2 tsp oil
- 1/4 tsp mustard seeds
- 1/4 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp urad dal
- 1/4 tsp asafoetida
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp sambhar masala
- Salt to taste

For garnishing

- 2 tbsp finely chopped coriander leaves and lemon slice

Directions

- Cut the bread into small pieces.
- Now heat oil and butter in a pan and let it melt.
- Add mustard, cumin and urad dal, let it splutter
- Now add asafoetida and curry leaves.
- Add onion, carrots, capsicum and sauté well till the onions turn translucent.
- Now add tomatoes, ginger-garlic paste, chilly, turmeric, sambhar masala, salt and mix well and cook it till the tomatoes turn soft.
- Add bread pieces and toss them to coat all the bread pieces well.
- Sprinkle some finely chopped coriander and mix everything together
- Cover and cook for 2 minutes.
- Take out in serving plate, garnish with coriander leaves and slice of lemon
- Serve hot.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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

Substitute Oat Milk in Sweet & Savory Recipes

Like other non-dairy milks, oat milk is made from blending the rolled oats with water, then straining out the oat solids to get a milk-like beverage. Its overall texture and creaminess can be manipulated with the amount of water, and sometimes, the addition of vegetable-based oils (like sunflower or rapeseed), as well as sugar and flavoring (like vanilla or chocolate).

But unlike other non-dairy milks (rice and almond, especially), oat milk stands up to the heat of the kitchen and chill of the freezer well.

There are a few things you have to keep in mind when swapping it for dairy milk in recipes.

The main thing to consider is fat content and function: Is the liquid the oat milk is replacing

higher in fat? If the answer is yes, reach for an extra-creamy variety of oat milk, or supplement the fat content with an added tablespoon of oil or butter. If you are subbing oat milk in for something lower in fat (like, for water in a breakfast smoothie or blended soup), expect a creamier, fuller-bodied result.

Use Oat Milk In Sweet Recipes

When substituting oat milk in sweet recipes, your best bet is to start with a higher-in-fat-content, unflavored oat milk. These will typically be labeled “extra-creamy” on the carton, but to be sure, check the nutrition label. Oat milk can be swapped using a 1:1 ratio for traditional



milk in custards, mousses, buttercreams, and ganache. The end result, as you might expect,

will be lighter than if you had used whole milk, but the structure will be sound.

The challenge comes with baked items: Non-dairy baked goods can sometimes lack that elusive golden-brown finish—something that happens only when there's a specific amount of fat and sugar present. To help the browning along, scan the recipe you are making for opportunities to increase fat (add a tablespoon of oil or butter per cup of oat milk for a fat content that is similar to whole milk) or simply finish the pastry with a brush of oat milk and sprinkle of turbinado sugar (which will make for a sparkly effect).

Yoga to Fight Covid-19

Dr. AKHILA VINOD
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

The year 2020 is defining one of the most memorable years of our lifetime. This unprecedented COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives, creating a new way of working and living. During these times of change and uncertainty, it's important to focus on self-care. It's an important time to bring our health and well-being to the forefront.

For the past few months, we have been hearing a lot about nutritious food, sunlight, Vitamin D, exercises, immunity, and staying healthy. Earlier our priorities were different. But now we have the time to introspect our lifestyle and make the necessary changes to regain or maintain a healthy lifestyle.



Yoga is known to be excellent training for a clear and healthy mind. It also promotes physical health in multiple ways. Studies have shown that regular Yoga practice correlates with increased well-being, stress and inflammation modulation, immune system enhancement, and counteracting some forms of infectious challenges.

Yoga and Immunity

There is an undeniable relation between

stress, hormones, and immunity. When we have stressed our body, it produces the hormone cortisol. Stress triggers insulin resistance too. Imbalance of hormones results in the stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system which in turn causes hypertension, shortness of breath, insomnia, and negative emotions.

Yoga is a gentle approach to stimulate our organs to gain optimum capability. This can be achieved through postures or Asanas and in Yoga.

A posture is defined as a state of steadiness and comfort. Yoga postures along with the controlled breathing exercise called Pranayama. This can help boost immunity.

When we practice Yogic postures and Pranayama our parasympathetic nervous system is activated which in turn controls hypertension, improves lung efficiency, gives good sleep, generates and positive emotions.

A survey report from India claims that Bhramari Pranayama (Bhramari means bee) showed excellent results in 2004 in the fight against the SARS-CoV. Bhramari Pranayama increases the production of nitric oxide which has anti-inflammatory, antiseptic properties and facilitates the smooth functioning of the respiratory, digestive, and blood circulatory systems. Ginger, garlic, lemon, pineapple, leafy vegetables, pomegranate, nuts, and seeds are rich sources of nitric oxide.



Bhramari Pranayama

Sit relaxed in a quiet place and close your eyes. Close your ears with both index fingers. Now take a deep breath in. As you breathe out make a long humming sound just like a bee. Repeat this 5-10 times, twice a day on an empty stomach for maximum result.

Ustrasana (Camel Pose)

Stand on your knees with each leg a little apart. Bend backward slowly. As you do this exhale, raise one hand and gently place the palm on the corresponding heel. Likewise, place the palm of the other hand on the other heel. This may feel a little difficult in the beginning but will improve with practice. Now inhale, bend your head backward and feel your chest fully opened up. Stay in the Ustrasana for a few seconds. Come back slowly to the original position. The Camel Pose expands chest muscles, increases oxygen supply to the cells, and improves lung efficiency.

Matsyasana (Fish Pose)

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position. Now slowly lie down on your back. Hold the hips with both hands and supporting the upper part of the body on your elbows try to curve back by raising your chest. Continue it till the crown of your head touches the floor. Stay in the position for a few seconds and come back to the original position releasing your arms and legs. Breathe easy and relax. Matsyasana



regulates hormonal balance, especially thyroid problems, and stimulates sense organs. This particular Asana is especially good for the lungs.

Some research findings suggest that Covid-19 is here to stay. Until an effective vaccine is found out the only armor at our disposal is good health. Some of you may be perfectly fit, others may be having health issues, some others on their path to regain good health. And there is a fourth category who take their health for granted. Yoga fits the bill for all. As the world copes with the new normal the best way you and loved ones can adapt to the change is by building a robust body and balanced mind. And Yoga is a key to unlock that world of health and wellness.

(Dr. Akhila Vinod is a certified Yoga Therapist specialized in Corporate and Holistic Training, Naturopathy Consultant, NLP Practitioner, and Acupuncturist. She holds an Ultimate Back Care certification from STOTT PILATES. Her innovative practices include Kalari Yoga, Yogance, Yoga for Disabled, Yogilates, and Yogic Healing. Dr. Akhila is a versatile Indian classical dancer as well. You can reach her at yogahealthq8@gmail.com)



Some prison inmates to serve sentence at home

In a bid to reduce overcrowding in prisons, lower the risk of coronavirus infection among

inmates and prison-staff, and save money for the state, the Supreme Committee for Royal Pardons has stated that people sentenced to a maximum of three years can serve the remainder of their sentence at home.

Announcing the policy change, Mohammed Al Duaj, the head of the Committee said this mechanism was only applicable to Kuwaiti and Beidoun (stateless) prisoners, and did not extend to expatriate inmates.

He also clarified that those confined to home arrests would have to wear electronic tracking bracelets, and would be obliged to stay in their homes to complete the period of sentence. They would not be allowed to go out of their homes, except under special conditions and with prior permission. Those who violate the stipulations would be promptly returned to prison, said Al Duaj.

Joint campaign against residency, labor law violators

A series of campaigns targeting areas with a large population of expatriates and makeshift markets in the country have apprehended scores of residency and labor law violators.

The campaign, launched jointly by the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), the Ministry of Interior (Residency Affairs) and Kuwait Municipality, has conducted daily campaigns in expatriate areas such as Khaitan, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh, Farwaniya, Wafra, Kabad, and Jahra.

More than a 100 labor and residency law violators have been arrested since the launch of



the campaign. Over 30 expatriates with either article 18 or 20 visas were arrested in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area, for working in jobs other than with their sponsors, or were residency law violators. Another 25 workers were reported arrested in Kabad and Wafra areas for operating makeshift markets selling foodstuff, vegetables and fruits.

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Deportations slow down during pandemic

The number of expatriates deported from the country during the first ten months of 2020 dwindled to 13,000, a sharp drop from the 34,000 deportees during the 12 months of 2018 and the 40,000 deportations in 2019.

Officials cite the ongoing pandemic as main reason behind the slump in deportation numbers. Early on in the COVID-19 crisis, as part of precautionary measures to curb the spread of the virus, the authorities imposed travel restrictions on people and closed down Kuwait International Airport to all commercial flights. The airport shut-down in mid-March continued for the next

four-and-half months, with only cargo and special chartered flights being allowed to land during this period. Lack of flights from Kuwait International Airport meant that all deportations had to be halted during this period. Moreover, since most government offices also remained closed during this time, further formalities in the deportation process could not be completed.

In addition, as courts were also not in session, new deportation orders could not be heard or a sentence issued by the judiciary. Given these circumstances, the fact that Kuwait managed to deport 13,000 people within the past ten months, is in

itself quite an achievement.

Around 90 percent of those deported during the last ten months were judicially deported after courts ruled against them for committing felonies or misdemeanors. The remaining 10 percent were administrative deportations arising from decisions by the Ministry of Interior.

Over 900 men and women are reportedly still remaining in the deportation center awaiting the completion of deportation procedures, while some others are awaiting decisions in cases pending against them in court cases. A few have been in the deportation center for a while now, as they



have travel bans filed against them because of financial debts they incurred and must repay before being deported.

IWG-Kuwait welcomes new members



International Women's Group (IWG) Kuwait President, Ambreen Mustafa, wife of the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, along with members of the Executive Board met with the wives of newly accredited Ambassadors to the

State of Kuwait on 26 October.

The meeting was an opportunity to welcome the group's new Honorary members by sharing some cultural and historical information about Kuwait and the activities of the IWG.

Traffic authorities turn to drones to pursue reckless drivers

The latest technology is being used to pursue reckless drivers and anyone violating traffic regulations on the roads. The Traffic authorities are using drones to monitor places where crowds gather in various regions, especially the external roads, as well as the sites common for races on public roads.



the Traffic Investigations officers confronted them with evidence from the drones showing them committing serious traffic violations.

Their vehicles were impounded, and the three people will be referred to the Traffic Court next

Sunday. Footage taken from the drones will be presented to the traffic court judge as evidence against the violators.

The Director of Medical Emergencies in the Ministry of Health, Munther Al-Jalahma, told a local daily the department dealt with 10,311 road accidents during 2019, which roughly calculates as 860 accidents per month or 28 per day.

According to Al-Jalahmah, 943 cases were recorded in January, 934 in February, 889 in March, 892 in April, 801 in May, 822 in June, 828 in July, 722 in August, 689 in September, and 855 in October, 959 in November and 977 in December.

Expelling expatriates may not be the answer to Kuwait's deep economic malaise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The new law tasks the government with drawing up policies and plans to restructure the country's lopsided demographic structure, mainly by slashing the number of expatriates in a structured and time bound manner. The law, which received unanimous support from lawmakers, was passed in its final reading after a few amendments were added to the bill. A key amendment, introduced by the government, scrapped a provision in the bill that called for setting nationality-based quotas on the number of foreigners.

The law now stipulates that the government will issue 'mechanisms' to deal with the imbalance in the population structure within one year of publication of the law. These 'mechanisms' would ensure a ceiling on expatriate workers in the country, while taking into account the need for foreign workers to ensure the unhindered implementation of the country's ambitious national development plan. The law also assigns the Cabinet to provide the National Assembly with annual reports on progress made in implementing the law.

Months before the law was passed it was debated at length in parliament and in public forums. In a presentation to parliament on the bill in early August, the government conceded that the lopsided population structure had led to a host of negative security, social, economic and cultural consequences for the country. As guardians of public monies and social mores, the parliamentarians can probably pat each other on unanimously passing the population bill.

With general elections set for 5 December, many lawmakers have now headed off to campaign for a seat in the National Assembly on the strength of their achievements in the 15th legislative term of parliament. This would perhaps be an ideal time to take a look at the population bill from a different perspective, and

to explore the practicality, as well as the social and economic costs of implementing it.

Let us begin by stating that expelling expatriates is not the answer to Kuwait's deep economic malaise. The country's current skewed population structure is not the reason for Kuwait's continuing economic woes, its falling revenues, or growing deficits. Expatriates are not to be blamed for the absence of economic diversification, or the negligence of human resource development among citizens over the years.

Foreigners cannot be the reason for an inefficient public sector overflowing with unnecessary and often incompetent national workforce; or for an anemic private sector that prefers to hire cost-effective expatriates in place of nationals. And, although they constitute the marginal labor sector, the laborers cannot be held solely responsible for their arrival in the country, they paid unscrupulous visa traders, many of whom are nationals, for the visa to enter the country.

Expelling expatriates will not solve any of the inherent problems of Kuwait; it will not make the economy more diversified, or the national human resources more talented. The public sector will not transform into efficient entities with the removal of foreigners, nor will the private sector become more dynamic and choose to employ nationals. Throwing expatriates out will not even solve the problem of visa traders, as the perpetrators of such nefarious trades will always find some other lucrative illegal means to make money. On the contrary, the expelling of expatriates could worsen the existing economic situation.

More than three generations after the discovery of oil and transformation of Kuwait's economy and society, the country still remains wholly dependent on petroleum exports for its economic sustenance. In the nearly six decades since Kuwait's independence, there

has been very little economic diversification, and hydrocarbon export revenues continue to constitute around half of Kuwait's GDP and over 90 percent of government's income. This near-total dependence on revenue from extraction of a natural resource has defined Kuwait as a rentier model economy.

Rentier economies are characterized by deep and inherent structural imbalances that make it difficult to introduce any serious economic restructuring and diversification or implement needed financial reforms. Since the rent-producing resource is in the hands of the government, and rents kept growing over the years, the authorities opted to maintain the economic status quo, where the government collected the rent and shared it with citizens through a welfare state.

Rentier economies are not compelled to apply free market principles to create an environment conducive to economic growth. Rather than undertake any meaningful diversification of income sources, or lend support to develop a vibrant private sector so as to boost economic growth, encourage competition and generate employment, Kuwait has for decades depended on building and maintaining a welfare state that takes care of all the citizen's needs, right from the time of their birth to their burial, and in the process ensured loyalty of nationals to the existing political structure.

State largesse over the decades have also led to the growth of a specific rentier mentality among citizens far removed from any traditional concept of work-reward. Instead of relying on income or wealth gained from their productivity or risk bearing, citizens have come to depend on receiving income based on their sense of entitlement by virtue of their birth and nationality.

In support of this notion among nationals, of citizenship becoming a financial asset, the government lent its weight to laws that made it impossible for foreign companies to

operate independently or for expatriates to seek employment based on their merit. To do business or work in Kuwait, foreign enterprises and foreigners need to engage or work under the sponsorship of a citizen (kafil). The kafil permits the company to trade in his name, or work under his sponsorship, in return for a proportion of the proceeds, and in some cases, money for the residency visa, both of which amount to another form of rent that is usually found in rentier states.

The downside to all this state largesse and lack of economic diversification is that it has resulted in an unbalanced labor market, with a bloated inefficient public sector, and a private sector that prefers to employ low-cost expatriates hired from abroad in place of locally available nationals. It is no wonder then that in four of the six rentier model Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, foreign residents outnumber citizens in population.

In order to restructure this population imbalance the authorities need to first introduce meaningful economic diversification, which remains key to any sustainable development of the country going forward. To introduce an economic shift away from the current overreliance on hydrocarbon revenues, the government would need to lend full and unconstrained support for development of a dynamic private sector that is able to overcome the current 'crowding-out' by the public sector in projects and in providing employment to nationals.

All this would however entail confronting a social, political and economic culture that has evolved and entrenched over the decades since the discovery of oil. It would also involve overcoming political and economic interests with a deep vested stake in maintaining the status quo. Is Kuwait up to this, the answer is a resounding 'no'. The easier path, as usual, is to blame and expel the expatriates in the hope it will buy some more time. But, for how long?

Social media joins the fight against corruption

A new report from the Public Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha) reveals that 'whistle-blowers' in public sector entities and private firms have been using social media platforms to tip-off the Authority on corruption and other wrongdoing in their enterprises.

Information provided by these individuals, as well as investigative reports in newspapers, websites and social media platforms is enabling Nazaha to go after the corrupt, and track down information on their crimes.

Nazaha said in its report that during the period from the beginning of 2019 to August of this year, 59 corruption-related crimes in various government agencies in different areas were discovered and 111 officials were suspected of involvement in

corruption. Of these, 45 were assistants and 66 were either directors or deputies of various entities and institutions. The cases monitored during this period included alleged corruption related to seven ministers, 14 undersecretaries, 6 directors, and 14 of unspecified job status.

The report also showed that the Authority received a total of 646 complaints on various corruption crimes. Individuals were responsible for providing information used in 219 reports, followed by 68 reports from government agencies, and 5 were being monitored previously by the relevant department in Nazaha.

Nazaha added that its investigative work and the work of compiling reports on corruption cases were done within the framework of efforts

aimed at curbing corruption, protecting public money, and curbing financial irregularities in state agencies. The report was compiled by the Project and Monitoring Department of the Corruption Detection and Investigation Sector of Nazaha.

Elaborating on the government entities against which corruption cases were launched, the report indicated the highest percentage of complaints was against the Ministry of Health (33 complaints), followed by Public Authority for Agriculture with 17 complaints against it, the General Administration of Customs (16) and the Kuwait Municipality (14).

Regarding the rate of reports against officials and others, Nazaha noted that 95 directors of administration, 45 assistant undersecretaries, 36 directors of



a public body or institution, and 30 deputy directors of a public authority or institution were implicated on corruption charges.

Clarifying that not all information led to corruption charges being levelled in the report, Nazaha said that in August of this year the Authority received a total of 73 reports of alleged corruption, 27 of which were not covered by jurisdiction or were under study, 37 of which were registered

as administrative complaints, and only 9 complaints which met Nazaha's formal and substantive conditions, were registered in the report and counted as a complaint. During the same month, Nazaha also recommended that one of the complainants be referred to the Public Prosecution, along with a request to initiate a criminal case against the whistleblower on suspicion of forgery.

Government sources warn of curfew if gatherings take place



If seminars, gatherings and meetings for the candidates for the National Assembly elections increase in the coming days, health authorities will not hesitate to impose a partial curfew, warned senior government sources to a local daily.

The sources emphasized that gatherings are unacceptable and will lead to an increase in coronavirus infections, and pointed out that there should be compliance with health requirements, and whoever is in violation should be punished with severe penalties.

All government agencies, including the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health, will ensure all gatherings are avoided, and no violations of health measures are committed. If the curfew is imposed, it will be dismantled only one day before the elections, in order to protect the public's health. The government will not hesitate to take any action it deems appropriate in the public's interest.

IMA Ladies Wing and IDF host Breast Cancer webinar



Under the patronage of Ministry of Awqaf (Kuwait), Ladies Wing of Indian Muslim Association conducted a webinar on Breast Cancer Awareness with a renowned medical Doctor, Dr. Susovana Sujit Nair, a community secretary of Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), on 17 October.

The President of IDF Dr. Amir Ahmad gave a short Inaugural speech, where he appreciated the efforts and steps taken by IMA - Ladies Wing for the awareness program on Breast Cancer. The keynote speaker Dr. Susovana gave a detailed lecture on the subject giving deep insights on causes, treatment and preventive measures of Breast Cancer.

The event concluded with interactive question and answer session where a good number of participants interacted with the doctor.



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Rethinking Resilience in Business



KERYN JAMES AND PETER BAKKER

Keryn James is Group Chief Executive at Environmental Resources Management. Peter Bakker is President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

COVID-19 is the biggest public-health crisis in a century and has caused the deepest economic recession of the modern era. The pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities in public-health systems and social safety nets around the world, brought vast inequalities to the surface, and demonstrated how major disruptions can snowball through interconnected systems. Clearly, our societies and economies are not nearly as resilient as we had believed.

One reason we have found it so difficult to react to COVID-19 is that we have vigorously removed 'slack' from our systems. Businesses have become disciples of the gospel of efficiency and just-in-time production, fiscally stretched governments struggle to provide even basic services, and we have pushed natural systems to their limits. Now that a crisis has arrived, we see that what was



perceived as excessive slack was necessary redundancy.

More crises await, from domino effects stemming from COVID-19, to the full impact of climate change and other disruptions of the natural systems on which we rely. Some crises will inevitably arrive as 'black swans', without warning, but many others will be what Michele Wucker calls 'gray rhinos': highly probable, high-impact threats that we know about but tend to ignore.

All chief executives should anticipate at least one major shock during their tenure, and prepare and lead accordingly. Although there is a growing body of analysis concerning the impact of COVID-19 on business, most of it is still focused on the immediate response. In a recent issue brief, therefore, our organizations explore how companies can improve their long-term thinking and planning, and better prepare for similar future events.

Our work builds on discussions with members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and a series of interviews with firms headquartered in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. It also incorporates insights regarding the pandemic's impact from the 2020 GlobeScan/SustainAbility Leaders Survey, and further draws on a broader review of long-term resilience and business responses to COVID-19.

The brief highlights three key lessons for business. First, we cannot hide from gray rhinos or black swans. Companies must prepare better for both known and unknown threats, in part by returning slack to our systems. To withstand future shocks, businesses must change and extend their view of long-term resilience. Critically, they must accept that a company's resilience is determined not only by what is inside its four walls, but also by ecosystems, communities, economic conditions, the rule of law, effective governance, and more.

Second, businesses need to embed resilience, once established, more deeply in their language and especially their practice, to prevent it from atrophying. Firms that do so will be able to anticipate and prepare for all future scenarios, minimize the impact of the shocks that do hit, and recover more quickly from them. We found that companies whose values and purpose are deeply embedded and widely understood at all levels can be more agile and decisive during crises. Cultural alignment on purpose and vision within an organization helps to build trust and openness, which are essential for effective and authentic internal and external communication, as well as collaboration.

Third, companies can build greater long-term resilience through improved approaches to corporate risk management, human and social capital, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) information. In each case, firms need to emphasize certain steps.

Better risk management calls, most notably, for a shift from traditional rules-based approaches to more flexible, regular, and process-oriented methods that enable ongoing learning and exploration. It also requires firms to incorporate tools and approaches likely to spur more outside-the-

box thinking and reveal harder-to-predict threats often referred to as 'unknown unknowns'.

Improving the management of human and social capital requires listening and responding to people both inside and outside the organization, and ensuring that the insights gathered are used to define and uphold the company's vision. Furthermore, companies should consider extending workforce protection measures originally designed for their employees to supplier workforces and non-permanent employees throughout the value chain. In addition, as we seek to balance the health and economic dimensions of the pandemic over an extended period, we must constantly adapt and enhance the measures for workers who are interacting with one another and the public.

Finally, firms must continue to improve ESG disclosure, especially by accelerating the adoption of common standards and metrics, and providing more information on issues critical to business resilience during the pandemic (such as employee well-being, diversity and inclusion, and safety). Companies also need to improve their sustainability assessments by including a greater diversity of stakeholder perspectives, longer time frames, and broader scenario planning, as well as giving greater weight to social issues in disclosure and strategy.

“ Resilience is less about maintaining a steady state than about adopting agile, dynamic, and transformational behaviors and actions in response to pressure, in other words, being adaptable. ”

Resilience is less about maintaining a steady state than about adopting agile, dynamic, and transformational behaviors and actions in response to pressure, in other words, being adaptable. This, in turn, requires firms to emphasize purpose and values in leadership, improve stakeholder engagement, and redesign supply chains. But above all, firms must embrace longer-term thinking and new and sustainable business models and behaviors.

True resilience is not about withstanding difficult conditions, but rather embracing what it takes to thrive at the organizational and systems level. Resilience stems not only from reliable access to raw materials and operational efficiency, but also from recognizing and protecting the enormous investments and value found in skilled and healthy workforces and vibrant communities. It requires protecting and enhancing vital ecosystems, and ensuring strong institutions, transparent rule of law, and healthy national and local budgets. And it means recognizing the central role of innovation in creating value in the face of challenges and disruptions.

COVID-19 is forcing firms to reimagine resilience. Instead of trying to strengthen their ability to resist change, companies must learn how to adapt and adjust if they are to continue to exist as employers, value creators for shareholders, and trusted members and supporters of communities around the world.

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Eating is part of what makes travel so exhilarating. When one thinks of a place, one of the memorable experiences recalled is either because of the food eaten or the people one has shared it with. A meal abroad is more than an intake of calories, it is an exercise in cultural immersion. What people eat, when they eat, where and how they source their food, what gastronomic rituals they observe – all offer telling insights into a place and its people. Celebrating a unique relationship between food and travel, between place and plate, this endlessly fascinating adventure will be regularly featured on our pages.

CANADA

LOBSTERS AND OYSTERS

Sample some of the Atlantic's tastiest seafood along New Brunswick's eastern shore.



If you are searching for just-off-the-boat seafood, there is no better place to start than Shediac, northeast of the city of Moncton, where you can join a cruise to learn about lobstering as you feast on whole steamed lobster. North of Shediac, a series of seaside villages provides the opportunity to sample lobster stews and bisques, pastas with lobster sauce, and lobster rolls made with moist chunks of meat mixed with a touch of mayonnaise. Beausoleil oysters are harvested just offshore, and in Bouctouche and Shippagan they are on the



menu either steamed, grilled, sautéed, or in thick, hearty chowders, while near the Acadian community of Caraquet you can savor the buttery-sweet Caraquet oysters from nearby Chaleur Bay. Heading back south, cross to Prince Edward Island (PEI) via the Confederation Bridge for a taste of Malpeque Bay oysters—an oversized bivalve with a sweet, mild flavor harvested from the eponymous bay on the island's northwestern shore. In Hope River, in central PEI, look out for St. Ann's Church, where you may see a sign announcing a lobster supper.

When to go: Fresh seafood is available year-round. Summer and fall—the seasons when most attractions are open—have the best weather.

Planning: Fly into the greater Moncton International Airport and rent a car. Stay at least a week to eat your fill of lobsters and oysters and visit landmark sights, such as New Brunswick's Hopewell Rocks and Fundy National Park, and PEI's Charlottetown and the house in Cavendish that inspired L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*.

Websites: www.tourismnewbrunswick.ca, www.peiplay.com, www.lobstertales.ca, www.lobstersuppers.com

Seafood Festivals

■ Shediac, which bills itself as the Lobster Capital of the World, has held an annual Lobster Festival, featuring lobster-eating contests and lobster dinners, every July since 1949.

■ Plan your itinerary around the Atlantic Seafood Festival held in Moncton in August. The festival combines celebrity-chef demonstrations, wine and food tastings, and culinary competitions with musical entertainment. Competitors vie for the title of fastest oyster-shucker or top chef for the best seafood chowder.

■ The Prince Edward Island international Shellfish Festival in Charlottetown features three different oyster-shucking competitions pitting the world's best shuckers against each other. The September event also includes championships for best potato seafood chowder and best cream chowder and best cream chowder, as well as shellfish cooking demonstrations presented by the culinary Institute of Canada.



TSUKIJI MARKET SUSHI

JAPAN

Take a tour of Tokyo's famous fish market and sample the freshest sushi.



Five o'clock in the morning along the Tokyo waterfront and the Tsukiji Fish market is already at fever pitch, workers whisking seafood around in wooden handcars and electrified ta-rays that look like futuristic golf carts. The market's inner sanctum is a warehouse where the world's best tuna is auctioned each morning to professional buyers under contract to the leading fishmongers and restaurants around Tokyo. A label on each fish identifies its point of origin—Somalia, Tahiti, Ireland. The action is frenzied, the auctioneer standing on a wooden box as the buyers shout their bids. Many of the tuna wind up in Tsukiji's warren of 1,500 stalls, where around 450 types of seafood



are sold on any given day, including the ingredients that go into Tokyo's prized sushi. Most of the stalls have been family run since 1920s, when Tsukiji was established, and many of them specialize in a particular type of seafood—tako (octopus), ika (squid), unagi (freshwater eel), hamachi (yellowtail tuna), and so on. Sushi was originally created as a way to preserve seafood in salt and rice in the era before refrigeration, and there are now hundreds of types ranging from ancient narezushi (salted, fermented fish layered with rice and left for six months before eating) to modern forms like the California roll that includes avocado and imitation crabmeat.

When to Go: There is no particular season for sushi in Japan, and Tsukiji Fish Market is open year-round. Tuna auctions take place 5:30-7 am; the market winds down by early afternoon.

Planning: Anyone Sushi is available in eateries around the edge of Tsukiji, and even at the crack of dawn the locals would not consider eating it without a bottle of Japanese beer or potent sake. One of the more authentic market cafes is Ryuzushi, where patrons sit along the bar while the chef makes the sushi in front of them. Three hours is plenty of time to witness the tuna action, wander through the market, and grab a bite to eat. The busy streets around the market are lined with shops and stalls culinary accessories, including sushi and sashimi dishes, soy-sauce holders, wooden cutting boards, chopsticks, and wonderful hand-crafted knives.

Websites: www.jnto.go.jp, www.tsukiji-market.or.jp/tukiji_e.htm

Wasabi and other Condiments

■ Sashimi and sushi comprise many of the same seafood. But while sashimi is generally eaten solo, sushi is always bundled together with a bite sized portion of white rice. They also share several popular condiments, including soy sauce, wasabi (mustard), and gari (pickled ginger). Although purists declare that wasabi and soy sauce should never be mixed prior to their arrival in your mouth, even in Japan it is common to blend them into a dipping sauce that dilutes the fiery green mustard.

Wasabi is made from the thick roots of leafy green plant called wasabia japonica. In olden days, a sharkskin grater was used to produce the flakes that were ground into mustard paste.

■ Although wasabi complements the taste of sushi and sashimi, it may also contain compounds that kill the microbes and parasites found in raw fish.

■ Indigenous to the Japanese archipelago, wasabi once flourished along mountain streams, but is nowadays more commonly farmed. Demand is such that Japan must now import wasabi from China, Taiwan, and even as far away as New Zealand.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Inequality and its Discontents



MICHAEL J. BOSKIN

Professor of Economics at Stanford University and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. A former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers from 1989 to 1993, he headed the Boskin Commission, a congressional advisory body that highlighted errors in official US inflation estimates.

Inequality has been seizing ever more of the public's attention in recent years, reflected everywhere from papal encyclicals and economic tomes by French socialists to technical academic debates and the demotic language of politicians and pundits. The health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further elevated these concerns.

But which aspect of inequality should we be worried about? There are inequalities of opportunity and inequalities of outcome; there is overall inequality, and there is inequality at the tails of the distribution. Should we be more worried about absolute or relative positions – mobility or stability? What is really more important, the distribution of the economic pie or the level and growth of living standards? In China over the past four decades, inequality has soared, even as hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of abject poverty. In the United States today, after-tax per capita GDP is 50 percent higher than in less unequal Denmark and Sweden, where higher taxes fund huge welfare systems. Among the American states, California has the highest poverty rate once one adjusts for its 20 percent higher average household size and 15 percent higher cost of living.

Moreover, consumption and disposable income are considerably less unequal than the oft-quoted market income figures. Average measures taken over a longer term tend to show less inequality, reflecting the fact that many people are poor or rich only temporarily. Many of my university students currently have low incomes, but will almost certainly be very well off later in their lives. It is not surprising that natural age-earnings profiles and measures of life-cycle wealth accumulation would show considerable inequality at any point in time. All data



sources have strengths and limitations, be it sample size, frequency, item coverage, or comparability (especially relevant in the case of international data).

Accounting as best as I can for these factors, I have compiled the following summary of major trends in US inequality in recent decades. Since around 1980, the skill premium in wages has grown substantially, whereas lower-skill real (inflation-adjusted) wages have grown more slowly (not to be confused with a decline). This reflects technology's bias toward skilled labor, globalization's negative effects on less-skilled wage earners, and the composition of labor-skill supply and demand.

During this period, overall inequality increased in almost all advanced economies (though some believe it will reverse), suggesting that domestic policies could not have been the primary cause. Similarly, after a long period of stability, labor's share of national income has declined in all major economies.¹

Meanwhile, though social mobility has remained at considerable levels, it likely declined, including inter-generationally. Changes in the wage distribution have been concentrated mostly in the top half, and though there has been a relative increase in wealth at the very top, it is less than some commentators claim. Indeed, there has been

a huge increase in cash and in-kind transfer payments. One-sixth of US income comes from such payments, and the rate in Western Europe's social-welfare states is even higher. America's unfunded entitlements liabilities have grown to several times the already-high national debt.

While inequality in disposable income (and even more so in consumption) remains substantial, it is much lower than inequality in market incomes. After adding transfers and subtracting taxes, one finds that the income of the top 1 percent in the US falls by over one-third, while that of the bottom 20 percent triples.

Finally, until recently, only limited progress was made in combating poverty, despite the proliferation of several scores of programs costing \$1.2 trillion per year. In the three years prior to the COVID-19 crisis, however, the acceleration of economic growth was accompanied by a reduction in poverty to the lowest level ever. Median incomes rose far more than in the preceding eight years, and wages grew most rapidly at the bottom. The income gap between those with a college degree and those without narrowed, as did the gap between whites and minorities.

Where do these broad trends leave us? Former US President John F. Kennedy famously proclaimed that "a rising tide lifts all boats." (More accurately, a rising tide lifts the

most boats and leaves the fewest grounded or sunk.) In a growing economy, the absolute well-being of those near the top and the bottom are positively correlated, so the most important policies to pursue are those that promote strong economic growth and full employment.

In this context, there is not much scope for major expansion of the welfare state without seriously harming economic growth and thus inter-generational equity. Any such expansion is limited by the ever-larger unfunded liabilities for Social Security, Medicare, and their state and local analogs, as well as by the negative incentive effects of higher explicit and implicit taxes (reflecting the rate at which recipients lose benefits as income rises).

By consolidating, modernizing, and better targeting existing programs, the US could free up resources for where they are most needed. The federal government does not need 47 job-training programs in nine agencies, costing some \$20 billion per year and yielding poor results. Likewise, slowing the growth of Social Security spending on those who already have considerable other resources could reduce the need for higher future taxes and help achieve President Franklin D. Roosevelt's original goal of providing a "measure of protection ... against poverty-ridden old age."

Moreover, educational reforms, such as greater school choice and merit pay, can improve opportunities for disadvantaged children. And taxing a broader base of economic activity and people can keep rates as low as possible while still adequately funding the necessary functions of government.

While some on the left and libertarian right push for a universal basic income, it would be far better simply to subsidize low wages for those able to work. That would raise incomes, provide stronger work incentives, and get more people onto the economic ladder than would high minimum-wage mandates that price people out of the market and create welfare dependency. And while the direct costs of wage subsidies would be substantial, they would be heavily offset by the reduction in payments from existing programs.

It is time to start harnessing the power of the market rather than the government. That is how we will replace dependency with opportunity and upward mobility.

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Choice or Like, which comes first



Aversion to fish smell due to genes

While many people find the smell of fish overwhelming and unpleasant, in some people a mutation in a particular gene makes that fish odor less intense. A new study, the largest genome-wide association study (GWAS) of olfactory genes (associated with the sense of smell) in humans, looked at over 9,000 people in Iceland using a sniff test. The study also found that varying levels of mutation in nearby genes also left people unable to discern the smell of licorice and cinnamon.

Researchers at deCODE Genetics, a biopharmaceutical company based in Reykjavik, Iceland, who were behind the study noted that since our sense of smell is very important for the perception of flavor, these variants likely influence whether we like food containing these odors. Earlier studies have shown that people perceive odors based on olfactory receptors encoded by 855 olfactory genes.

Studies also revealed that about half of olfactory genes in people are thought to lack function, leaving humans with a relatively small repertoire of about 400 olfactory genes. The reason behind humans losing so many olfactory genes is not clear, nor is it clearly understood why variations in these genes might influence differences among people in their sense of smell.

To explore this, researchers at deCODE enlisted 9,122 Icelanders in a GWAS in search of variants that influence odor perception. To do it, they asked study participants to smell odors presented to them in pen-like devices that released a particular scent when uncapped. After sniffing each 'odor pen', the researchers asked them to name the smell and to rate the intensity and pleasantness of the smell. Those odors included key ingredients found in licorice, cinnamon, fish, lemon, peppermint, and banana.

The study turned up variants in three genes or genetic loci of interest, which they were able to confirm in a separate sample of 2,204 Icelanders. One of them is in an olfactory receptor gene called TAAR5 (trace amine-associated receptor 5). The TAAR5 variant affects perception of fish odor containing trimethylamine, a compound found in rotten and fermented fish, as well as other animal odors and various bodily secretions.

In the smell tests, people with a particular variant of this gene were more likely to not smell anything when presented with the fish odor or to use descriptors for it that were neutral or positive and not seafood related, such as labeling it as the smell of potatoes, caramel, and rose. While previous studies have shown the role for the gene in animals, the new findings are the first to show the important role of this gene and its variations to human odor perception and behavior.

The other two discoveries were found in more typical and common olfactory gene variants. They influenced an individual's ability to name licorice and cinnamon odors and also the intensity and pleasantness associated with those odors.

A common variant in a cluster of olfactory receptors was found to be associated with increased sensitivity to trans-anethole, which is found in black licorice products but also in spices and plants such as anise seed, star anise, and fennel.

Carriers of the gene variant found the licorice odor more intense, more pleasant, and could name it more accurately. Another variant influenced the perception of trans-cinnamaldehyde, the major ingredient in both Chinese and Ceylon cinnamon. Carriers of the variant not only found the odor more intense they could also name it more accurately.

Overall, the findings show that variation in olfactory genes influences odor perception in humans. They also show that, while humans have fewer olfactory genes compared to other species, some of the genetic variation that people do carry makes them more, not less, sensitive to particular smells such as licorice or cinnamon.

The extensive sequence diversity found in human olfactory receptor genes raises the possibility that our sense of smell is still being honed by natural selection. The researchers also plan to use the same olfactory tasks to investigate smell deficits, which have been identified as a characteristic of COVID-19 infection.

Scientists have long pondered over why people show preference for one product over another though both have similar specifications. Previous studies have attributed the tendency to pick one product over another due to an unconscious bias developed over a lifetime of making choices between things that are essentially the same.

To find out when people begin forming unconscious biases, the researchers at John Hopkins University in the United States turned to babies who have to make relatively few choices for themselves.

The researchers brought 10- to 20-month-old babies into the lab and gave them a choice of objects to play with: two equally bright and colorful soft blocks. They set each block far apart, so the babies had to crawl to one or the other, which would indicate a random choice.

When a baby reaches for one stuffed animal in a room filled with others similar to it, that seemingly random choice is probably an indication that she did not like what she did not choose. This bias for a product shown early on in our development is indicative that choice is intuitive and somehow fundamental to the human experience.

After the baby chose one of the toys, the researchers took it away and came back with a new option. The babies could then pick from the toy they did not pick the first time, or a brand new toy. The study showed that babies reliably chose to play with the new object rather than the one they had previously not chosen, probably thinking to themselves: 'I didn't choose that object last time, I guess I did not like it very much.'

The researchers suggested that this preference by even babies for not choosing what they had not chosen in the first place, is suggestive that as adults, we tend not to choose the thing we did not choose in the first place, even though we had no real preference in the first place.

In follow-up experiments, when the researchers instead chose which toy the baby would play with, the phenomenon disappeared entirely. If you take the



element of choice away, the phenomenon goes away. So clearly, the babies are really not choosing based on novelty or intrinsic preference.

The results surprised the researchers who said that they did not expect infants to be making such methodical choices. To continue studying the evolution of choice in babies, the research team said it would next look at the idea of 'choice overload.' For adults, while choice is good, too many choices can be a problem, so the lab will try to determine if that is also true for babies.

Since the act of making a choice develops early on and plays a role in how we feel about our options, it is interesting to know which comes first, our choice or our like for a product. The new research has now confirmed that contrary to popular belief that people choose things that they like, it was found that we like things because we choose them. And, we dislike things that we do not choose.

Throughout their life adults make unconscious inferences based on: "I chose this, so I must like it. I did not choose this other thing, so it must not be so good." Basically, we justify our choice after the fact.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Foreign election interference, can US complain



JACK GOLDSMITH

Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Four years after Russia's interference in the 2016 US presidential election, more countries seem to be joining the game in the run-up to this year's elections in the US on 3 November. In August, William Evanina, director of the US National Counterintelligence and Security Center, warned about "ongoing and potential" electoral influence efforts by Russia, China, and Iran. Last week, Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe and FBI Director Christopher A. Wray disclosed that Russia and Iran had obtained US voter registration data. "The two countries are stepping in to try to influence the presidential election as it enters its final two weeks," concluded the *New York Times*.

Americans have been understandably outraged and alarmed about foreign electoral interference. But the practice is not new; in fact, the United States was for a long time its leading exponent. As Dov Levin shows in his book, *Meddling in the Ballot Box*, the US and the Soviet Union (and subsequently Russia) engaged

“Can America keep the option on the table and still complain when other countries interfere in US elections? The answer matters, because the Internet has made such activities significantly easier, cheaper, and more effective.”

in 117 covert or overt foreign electoral interventions to help or hinder candidates or parties between 1946 and 2000, with the US accounting for 81 of these cases (or 69% of the total).

One of the most famous examples of US foreign electoral interference came at the dawn of the Cold War in 1948, when the CIA (in its first covert action) secretly subsidized public efforts to ensure that communist candidates were defeated in elections in Italy. It also spent millions of dollars on propaganda efforts and



supporting favored Italian politicians. These and similar practices, covert and overt, continued throughout the Cold War. CIA historian David Robarge told David Shimer, author of the book *Rigged*, that during this period, the Agency "hardly ever" altered votes directly, which implies that it sometimes did.

After the Cold War ended, the US government began to have scruples about interfering in other countries' elections. Congressional intelligence committees started to push back, and divisions grew within the executive. But the practice persisted. In 2000, President Bill Clinton authorized the CIA to provide covert support to opponents of then-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević's re-election efforts. George W. Bush's administration had well-advanced plans to interfere covertly in Iraq's January 2005 parliamentary election — the first since the fall of President Saddam Hussein — before fierce congressional resistance quashed the action. President Barack Obama's administration considered similar proposals, according to Shimer, but rejected them. These relatively recent events, combined with American anger at interference in its own elections, raise the important question as to whether the US still interferes in foreign elections, or at least holds open the option of doing so.

Some officials told Shimer that the US has abandoned electoral interference in the twenty-first century. Others hedged. "This is not something that intelligence does with anything like the sense of flexibility and freedom that it might have had in the early Cold War," said former CIA Deputy Director John McLaughlin. Avril Haines, who held the same role a decade later,

said that, "it is not acceptable to tamper with votes in an election," but (according to Shimer) declined "to comment on how the CIA may still seek to influence voters' minds." As former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper put it, "It's all a question of degree."

Former CIA Director Leon Panetta said that the agency does not alter votes or spread disinformation, but does influence foreign media outlets to "change attitudes within the country." Panetta told Shimer that the CIA would occasionally "acquire media within a country or within a region that could very well be used ... to deliver" messages, or try to "influence those that may own elements of the media to ... cooperate, work with you in delivering that message." It is hard to know exactly what types of activities Panetta had in mind, perhaps he was talking about traditional CIA propaganda efforts that intersect with electoral politics. But they sound similar to some of the Russian social media operations in 2016.

These varying accounts by US officials probably turn on definitional differences. Electoral interference can take many forms, including vote-changing, disinformation, doxing, propaganda, and financial support. Shimer gave me his view of where the US likely stands today: "It has not banned the practice of covert electoral interference, but it is an option that is not actually executed with great frequency. And that is different from the Cold War, but it is also different from saying that this is something the US categorically will not do any more, which is not where things are."

Shimer also reports that the US government is torn on how to proceed. Some officials think that America should

definitively end the practice, but others disagree. Panetta thinks the US should keep open the option of helping foreign political actors with money, propaganda, and other means in response to Russia's electoral interference operations. Similarly, McLaughlin says that, "I wouldn't want to take covert electoral interference off the table."

But can America keep the option on the table and still complain when other countries interfere in US elections? The answer matters, because the Internet, which emerged just as the US was winding down its aggressive phase of electoral interference, has made such activities significantly easier, cheaper, and more effective. Democracies are particularly threatened because their elections matter more, and because they barely regulate speech and the press. And, as we have learned in the last four years, foreign electoral interference via the Internet is extremely hard to stop. In the pre-Internet era, the Soviet Union often tried and always failed to interfere in US elections. In 2016, Russia succeeded wildly.

The US is still just beginning to figure out how to address the huge asymmetric advantage that the Internet gives its authoritarian adversaries in electoral interference. One response, called "defend forward", is to live in adversary networks and stop the interference before it begins. Another is to try to develop international norms against covert foreign electoral interference. But, given its twentieth-century track record, the US has little hope of establishing such norms until it publicly announces that it no longer engages in the practice, which it has so far been unwilling to do.

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Passive cooling device for enclosed areas

In Kuwait we do not have to imagine entering a sizzling hot car in summer; we experience it annually. While turning on the AC remotely before we enter our vehicle is now possible on several new model cars, this feature not only uses energy it also comes at the expense of engine and battery health. Scientists in South Korea have now come up with an ingenious device that passively absorbs radiative heat from inside enclosed areas and transfers it to the outside.

The enclosed space of your car parked out in the sun gets heated due to sunlight passing in through the transparent windows, as well as heat conducted in from the roof and sides of the vehicle. At the same time, the thermal radiation re-emitted by the heated car interior cannot escape through the windows, creating a 'greenhouse effect' that heats the car interior on some days to temperatures over 80. Elderly people and children are at a particularly high risk of suffering heat-stroke or hyperthermia



at such temperatures.

The heat inside a parked vehicle can be released by active cooling methods such as using the vehicle's fan or AC, but this involves energy expenditure and is not a sustainable solution. Another option is to roll down the windows and move the car, which while it does not involve spending additional energy is not an ideal



solution in inclement weather, in polluted environments or when driving along a highway.

Scientists from Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology (GIST) in South Korea have developed a new type of passive cooling technology to solve this issue. The new device, called 'Janus Emitter Technology' or JET for short,

comprises a stack of patterned quartz, silver, and polydimethylsiloxane thin layers. Each face of the JET has unique properties for passively cooling enclosed spaces. The bottom side absorbs a broad spectrum of thermal radiation from inside the enclosure and, re-emits this energy to the atmosphere on the top side of the device in a selective frequency range that maximizes emissivity.

The JET requires no electricity and no conscious effort from the user, which makes it a sustainable way of keeping the temperature of stationary vehicles, building interiors, and solar cells low. The researchers said that their work is the first to address passive radiative cooling for enclosed spaces, and they hoped it would create a ripple effect that bolsters research in this field.

In Kuwait, we cannot wait for this novel technology to arrive, so that everyone can get into their cars parked outside in summer and drive off, without the fear of getting baked in the bargain

Working towards change enhances my career in the UN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

It is such a wonderful experience preparing a new project, resource allocation and preparing implementation strategy, then there are different stakeholders and partners and achieving the desired result. Raising funds for a cause and achieving your target are very hard work and yet very rewarding mentally.

Tell us about your experience in Kuwait working in the United

Nations and also the tasks you undertake in getting the job done. I have started working for the UNH on 2009 and since then I was officially recruited and developed a long experience. At present being a program manager and analyst involves creating an annual work plan for the office that should link up between each GCC country strategy, the UN Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda, setting a time line, actual implementation and reporting. Moreover, I have to link up with other organizations under ONE UN theme, collaborate with other partners at governmental and non-governmental level. Our vision includes involving Youth, Women, Vulnerable groups, NGOs and private sector achieving SDG17 where possible in our projects. Therefore, over the course of the past decade I have met up with new partners and succeeded in creating continuous bounds with them

Where do you see yourself in the coming years in your career.

My ambition knows no boundaries; in the coming years my vision is to grow the UN Habitat role while achieving new milestones. While doing so, I will be reaching tangible results and create a legacy to become a role model to other Arab women follow in the UN. As a Kuwaiti citizen, my vision is to get appointed in a new post which no other Kuwaiti woman previously was recruited in and this in itself will be a kick start for my peers to consider working for the UN in larger numbers and climbing the success ladder.

Do you think more women from Kuwait should join international organisations.

Yes I do. We need more women from Kuwait and GCC countries get appointed in UN posts because they don't lack the experience or academic requirements. Only they need to take the challenge to prove to the world they can achieve success. Already we have Gulf women become medical and academic doctors,

engineers, artists, singers, teachers and even pilots, but until present time we face shortage in number of Gulf and Kuwaiti women working for the UN different organizations and in the UNH.

How has your job help connect people and bring them together

Yes. In many ways, we work for humanity, linking donors with vulnerable people. Our work is based on the fact that nations all over the world face different kinds of challenges depending on their geographical location; some nations face famine and poverty, while others suffer from pandemics and diseases, natural catastrophes or wars. For us at the UN, we don't work on basis of race, religion or gender, but rather we respond to nations needs and do our best to respond fast because time is a very important factor. Using our expertise, we carry out different projects linking donors with the end users.

What are your past times / hobbies

I love watching movies, but because of time restrictions I watch movies sometimes during my mission flights. My other hobbies include hiking, mountaineering, playing squash and learning new words in new languages. I like attending public talks, learning new information and travelling to discover historical places.

Any experience you would like to share with

My most precious experience is the ones related to humanitarian work, but let me talk about other sides of my personality. Since my undergraduate years until present time, I have worked in different jobs at full time and part time bases, for example I have worked as university journal editor and correspondent for some time, I volunteered as a microbiology lab technician in Ibn Sina Hospital in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 1990.

I also worked as a high school teacher, a University professor, a puppeteer and a scientific researcher. I am good at drawing but I can never sing! I believe there are no limits to human's capabilities and we only need to explore our hidden talents. I became a mountaineer during my post graduate years and I had the chance to do live translation for a famous cable news channel. Moreover, in 1997 I read a conference closing statement in Spanish in Mallorca, Spain. I have plenty of stories to tell about myself, but this does not mean I don't want to learn and experience new things in the coming years as I join new posts or at personal level.

ClipDrop offers copy and paste AR



Simple Augmented Reality (AR) no longer needs sophisticated computers or software, with a new app offering 'copy and paste' ease to creating realistic images.

The new app, ClipDrop, allows anyone to use their phone's camera to quickly grab snaps of surrounding objects and paste them into desktop apps. It is a smart twist on traditional AR, allowing you to make the physical world digital, unlike AR which projects digital images onto the physical world around you. The app which is available on free trial in beta form allows you to photograph everything around you and to quickly import the image into documents as cropped objects, cleanly extracting it from any ungainly backgrounds.

The tool lets you import images and even text from books, for example, into a variety of software and websites, including Google Docs, PowerPoint, Figma, Canva, and Pitch, as well as in Photoshop (where ClipDrop has a plugin available to allow objects to be dropped in as a new layer with an editable mask). Of course, you can also just use the app to grab images of everyday objects

around you to share as you normally would within iOS and Android.

In addition to the iOS and Android apps, the software is also available for Windows and macOS, letting you grab images and text from your desktop or the web and quickly import them into documents.

The concept of ClipDrop, which first emerged as a tech demo back in May, attracted a lot of attention from technophiles. The developers of the app, Cyril Diagne and Jonathan Blanchet, said they have spent the last few months turning this early demo into a commercial product, and that they had over 100,000 people registered on their beta waiting list wanting to try out the software.

Although ClipDrop is now publicly available, the developers have warned that it is still in beta form and that early users should expect some "bugs and rough edges."

You get five free photo clips with a download of the software, but clipping more requires a subscription. ClipDrop is currently priced at \$39.99 for a year, but after 20 November the price will rise to \$79.99 a year, or \$9.99 a month.



Scarcity of entertainment options stifles Kuwaitis and tourist opportunities

According to citizens and expats, there are very few recreational places in the country, which, if they were available, would make daily life less difficult. This was made evident during the peak season of the coronavirus epidemic when there were tight precautionary measures, and heavy restrictions on movement, including the closure of airports and the prevention of visits and gatherings among the public. It is high time for investments and plans to be introduced to help make Kuwait a reputable tourist destination, as well as to provide psychological benefits to the country's residents.

Some people own or rent farms, and chalets, for recreational purposes, and to relieve psychological pressures. However, there are still segments of society that do not enjoy this type of entertainment or do not have the required finances, and they have no other option, but to go to commercial complexes or just sit at home.

Real estate experts said that although Kuwait has all the facilities to be a tourist



destination, there are few recreational facilities, which makes the tourism sector almost non-existent, especially with the closure of the entertainment city and the removal of the People's Park, the ski hall and other recreational projects in addition to the cancellation of the season camping this year due to the continuing threat of the coronavirus pandemic.

The daily, quoting experts agreed that the time has come to attract local investments through cooperation between the public and private sectors. The government can lend their support by providing lands for this purpose and giving the opportunity to investors and the private sector to invest and develop distinctive entertainment projects.

They added, "The government must be serious and have a clear vision in supporting recreational projects and domestic tourism, to put Kuwait on the

global map for recreational and tourism projects."

Abdulrhman Al Terkait, Vice Chairman & CEO at Arkan Kuwait Real Estate, said, "The state did not seriously address the development of entertainment projects as there was no encouragement or setting up of government tenders for these projects, despite the Kuwaiti construction companies living up to international standards that enable them to design, create and complete entertainment projects. He explained that if the government gives contracting companies and local design offices, the space to participate, they will be innovative in developing these types of projects.

Regarding the obstacles that may face these projects, Al Terkait pointed to several factors, most notably: the lack of availability and allocation of sufficient spaces for the establishment

of recreational places, the difficulty of the legal procedures and to obtain the necessary licenses, and the exorbitant capital costs.

He also pointed out at the same time the benefits and positive implications that these projects may have on the state and society, including that it will constitute a good economic return that contributes to diversifying the state's revenues and will improve the psychological aspect of the Kuwaiti population, citizens and expats, in addition it will stimulate domestic and Gulf tourism. Al Terkait wished to see international brand entertainment projects being developed locally, such as: Atlantis Dubai, Ferrari Abu Dhabi, Lego Land, Six Flags, Warner Brothers, and others.

Al Terkait underscored that in order to create distinctive activities and a unique entertainment environment in the country, there are some requirements to be fulfilled, including:

- Providing material facilities for entertainment projects and encouraging investment in this sector.
- Supporting and encouraging the private sector by allocating "BOT" lands for recreational projects.
- Exploiting and allocating islands, as they are developed and managed by specialized local companies within legal and ethical restraints.
- Facilitating visa procedures and smoothening the process of tourist visits for foreigners to encourage tourism.
- Seek to attract investors to the country, especially those with the technical capabilities and skills to successfully complete these entertainment cities.

"The government must be serious and have a clear vision in supporting recreational projects and domestic tourism, to put Kuwait on the global map for recreational and tourism projects."

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