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Arabian Sea Dialogue, a new dawn to India-GCC relations

By Reaven D'Souza
 Managing Editor

India and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states share historical ties dating back hundreds of years that were founded on trade, social and cultural relations that have endured and grown stronger through the centuries. Historical ties between the two entities are further buttressed by geographical linkages, with the GCC being part of the 'immediate neighborhood' of India and sharing the waters of the Arabian Sea that connects all their shores.

Today, India and the GCC are working towards greater synergy and enhanced cooperation, by energizing

and revitalizing their traditional ties and imparting a new impetus to their relations. This renewed dynamism provides an opportunity to engage creatively and act effectively to realize significant mutual benefit for people of the region and for greater global good. It is against this new-found dynamism that a new international forum, the Arabian Sea Dialogue (ASD) 2022 is being held on Tuesday, 27 September in Mumbai, India. The ASD 2022 brings together government policymakers, private sector business leaders, intellectuals and academicians, media voices and representatives from institutions and civil society organizations, as well as the youth in the region to debate and ideate on topical issues of relevance to the two sides.



According to the organizers of the ASD 2022, the India-based Observer Research Foundation, the Dialogue will deliberate "on a blueprint for an 'Arabian Sea Community' to shape and reinvigorate the vibrance, passion,

and potential among the peoples of India and the Gulf, which is provided, nourished and united by their shared connection, the Arabian Sea".

Among the pertinent issues and concerns to India and the GCC, the

2022 iteration of the Arabian Sea Dialogue will deliberate on:

Geopolitics and Security: Ever since the discovery of oil in the region and the ensuing geo-political upheavals in the Middle-East, the Gulf states have been crucial to international politics and economics, and in balancing global power and influence in the region. However, recent developments, including the emergence of China as a new player on the block, the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions, the evolving Russia-Ukraine conflict, and ongoing discussions over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and Western powers, are shaping new security dynamics in the region.

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Thousands await airline tickets to be deported

Overcrowding of deportees in detention centers is once again creating a challenge for the Ministry of Interior (MoI) officials. This backlog in deportation is said to be due to the expiry of the contract signed with the company responsible for providing airline tickets to those awaiting deportation. Around 3,500

people are said to be awaiting tickets to exit the country.

According to media reports, the contract with the ticketing company expired in mid-August, and its renewal is still being processed and awaiting approval in the financial department at the Ministry of Interior.

The recent spate of security campaigns have led to an increase in the number of violators in detention centers, but the deportation department affiliated to MoI has reportedly refused to accept any new deportees unless they have an airline ticket.

While the number of detainees currently in the deportation center is around 1,300, a further 1,500 people detained in security campaigns and awaiting deportation are said to be lodged in the security directorates and in police stations. In addition, around 400 are being held in the residence investigations departments, over 200 are detained in the criminal investigation department, and about 100 in the Drug Enforcement Administration.

All the detainees have been ordered deported but cannot exit the country without the airline tickets from the company, which longer has a valid contract to deliver the tickets. Previously, the company responsible would issue the airline ticket to



the detainees and then collect the amounts from the sponsors. The sponsor was obliged to pay the ticket fare, as their file with the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) and their transactions with other government entities would remain blocked unless they paid for the ticket.

In the absence of the contract it is no longer possible for the company to provide the tickets, unless the deportee is willing to pay for the ticket from their own pocket.



The Business Year meets with KPMG

Recently, The Business Year met with Dr. Rasheed Al-Qenae the Managing Partner of KPMG Kuwait to discuss the dynamic changes and market trends of the local economy. Dr. Al-Qenae shared with the team the upcoming Private Enterprise Global Tech Innovator competition, which will enable entrepreneurs of Kuwait to develop and showcase their innovative ideas, and talked about the rise of FinTech solutions across the sectors of the Kuwaiti market. It was a pleasure to learn about the KPMG's insights and we look forward to seeing the young entrepreneurs of Kuwait achieving their success on the global level.'

Certificate of approval only after buildings revert to original state

Buildings that had recently been sealed by the Municipality for modifying their basements and using it for various purposes other than that licensed by the authorities, will have to be returned to their original condition before receiving the certificate of approval and removal of seals by the Municipality.

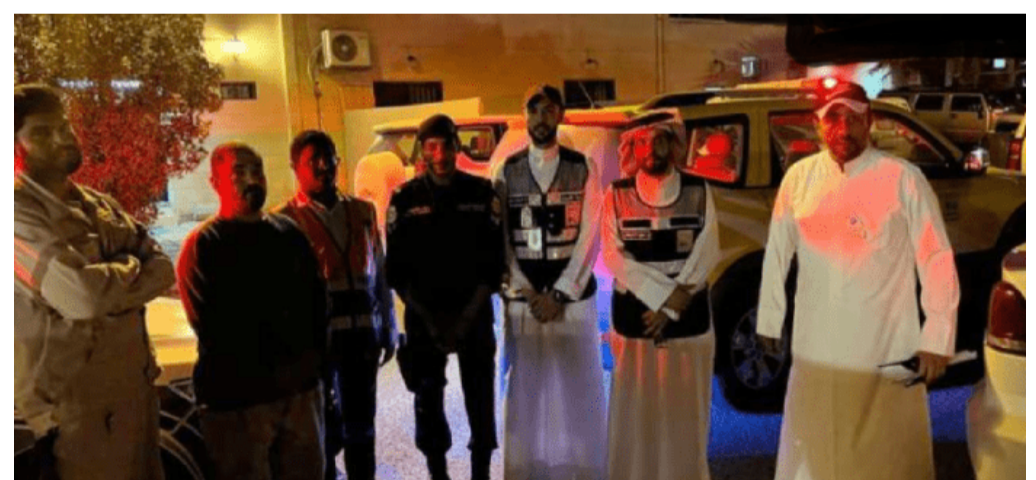
Head of the Violations Removal Department in the Hawalli Municipality, Ayed Al-Qahtani, confirmed that a certificate of description will not be issued to any building if the violating basement is not reverted to its original state as licensed. This is applicable for basements used as parking lots, service areas for the building's residents, or warehouses for construction materials.

The official said in a statement that this approach would oblige the owners of buildings and investment housing to return the violating basements to their pre-rectified condition, and as they were originally licensed by the relevant departments in the municipality.



The Director General of Municipality, Engineer Ahmed Al-Manfouhi, stressed the importance of taking legal measures against those who do not comply, and accordingly any basement found in violation of its licensed purpose will be sealed by the authorities. He also added that the inspection teams will carry out subsequent visits to the violating property after the initial warning to ensure compliance with the warning notice.

Municipality cuts electricity to buildings illegally housing bachelors



Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department at the Farwaniya Municipality last week cut off electricity to several buildings in Omariya for violating Ministerial Resolution No.57/2019 on providing accommodation to bachelors in private and model housing areas.

Electricity supply was cut off in cooperation and coordination with the Judicial Enforcement Team at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Interior.

Director of the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department, Eng. Saeed Al-Azmi, in

a press statement, said that the power was cut off after warning the owners of the property and acting on complaints from residents of the area that the owners of the property had rented part of their building to bachelors.

Eng Khaled Al-Osaimi said field tours will continue until all areas are cleared of bachelors from private and model housing areas and called on real estate owners to cooperate with the municipal supervisory teams and the concerned authorities to avoid legal accountability.

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Armenia: Celebrating 31 years of Independence

Armenia, a country with a unique culture and rich history testified by ancient historiographers and modern researchers is celebrating its 31st anniversary of independence on 23 September.

STAFF REPORT

In September 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia gained its independence and recreated the Third Republic of Armenia and subsequently joined the international community of independent states. Armenia has from then on resolutely walked the path of creating a sovereign, democratic, and social state.

As a political entity, Armenia is a small country with approximately three million people. However, more than double the

an identity for their state as an independent, cohesive and democratic nation.

In a recent exclusive interview with the Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, Armenian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sarmen Baghdasarian, spoke about his country's storied history, the worldwide community of Armenians, and of his keenness to further strengthen relations with Kuwait in all domains.

The ambassador began the interview by noting: "This year on 23 September, Armenia celebrates its 31st anniversary of independence. I believe that, just like freedom in the famous

meant more than just a formal declaration: above all, it meant the realization of a long-cherished dream driven by historical memories and a sense of the vital importance of regaining statehood.

"Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the idea of independence matured in the minds of the Armenian people not as an imaginary dream, but rather as a realistic goal. In 1991 Armenian people unanimously voted in favor of that goal, vowing to commit to a free, Independent and sovereign Republic of Armenia.

"As a young diplomat starting a career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at this critical juncture in Armenian history, there were unique challenges and opportunities. The early years of independence were both challenging and promising at the same time. After the collapse of the Soviet Union followed by the first Nagorno-Karabakh War and the economic crisis, the still-young Republic of Armenia faced difficult times. Having the opportunity to serve our newly independent country first-hand, and to witness the Armenian flag fluttering at the UN Headquarters for the first time was an incredible honor and joy for me and, of course, for every other Armenian."

Ambassador Baghdasarian continued: "Today, as an ambassador and the official voice of Armenia in Kuwait, I have several responsibilities and obligations. First of all, this position puts on me the responsibility of representing the spirit of Armenia that was shaped and perfected on the crossroads of civilizations; a spirit that contributed immensely to the development of humankind.

On the other hand, I am also obliged to uphold the reputation and image of a true Armenian individual, a 'glocal' citizen. Many may not have heard of Armenia, many may not be able to show it on a map, but I doubt that there is anyone who has not met or at least heard of an Armenian at some point of their life, in some part of the world.

I represent the Armenian who is the bearer of centuries-old history, of an ancient civilization, science, art, culture and tradition; the Armenian who built, created and left his indelible mark on history, and continues to leave his mark wherever he grows up to this day. Be it the famous Armenian car mechanic



working in Shuwaikh, or the inventor of color TV, or the developer of 'Moderna', the vaccine that became a household name during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I represent the Armenians, about whom the famous philosopher Emmanuel Kant said: "... rather intelligent and industrious people with unique roots, a people who can move from North to East and South to West within the old world and find genuine hospitality in whatever region they decide to stop in". These people are Armenians, the children of old and new Armenia, and as the face of Armenia first of all it is my duty to represent them with dignity."

Turning to Armenia's relations with the Arab world, and in particular with Kuwait, the ambassador noted: "As part of one geographical and geopolitical region, the Armenian and Arab people throughout their history shared similar challenges and fate. Connected by social, cultural, customary and political links the two nations have been living and co-creating side by side for centuries. The ties between the Armenian people and the Arab world grew stronger during the tragic events of the early 20th century, when thousands of Armenians escaping the Genocide found good hospitality and a safe shelter within the Arab world. From then on, a large part of Armenians became an important element of emerging Arab states putting the basis for the Armenian communities



“ For the Armenian people independence meant more than just a formal declaration: above all, it meant the realization of a long-cherished dream driven by historical memories and a sense of the vital importance of regaining statehood. ”

country's population, around seven million Armenians, live in countries around the world. This large diaspora makes Armenia a truly 'glocal' nation — a global nation with local Armenian communities worldwide. It is these glocal Armenians along with those residing within the country's borders who have carved

phrase, independence is also a state of mind. However, if freedom is more of an individual desire, independence is the embodiment of a collective aspiration and efforts. Independence is, in fact, the manifestation and the result of collective freedom.

"For the Armenian people independence

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Namaste Kuwait



makes history with first of its kind event



STAFF REPORT

History was created at the Embassy of India, Kuwait on 23 September, as a non-stop cultural program exceeding 14 hours of music and dance was performed by Indian artists from 8am to 10pm at the embassy auditorium.

The historical event titled 'Namaste Kuwait' was organized by the Indian Embassy in association with Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) and witnessed 75 art forms of India being performed by 750 artists for over 750 minutes in an unprecedented cultural extravaganza the likes of which Kuwait has never witnessed before.

Truly a magnificent display of India in its full splendor of color, dance music, and camaraderie, reflecting 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' the spirit of 75 years of India's Independence. The see-to-believe event was meticulously conducted with clockwork precision and was beautifully choreographed leaving the audience enthralled by the brilliant performances.

There could not have been a better way of bringing the community together in such large numbers over such an extended period; performing in cohesion and creating a lasting impression that will be remembered long after the event. Indians from all age groups, diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds performed together seamlessly putting Kuwait on the

cultural map for this creative and brilliant event.

The event was inaugurated by India's Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan. Delivering the inaugural remarks online he extended warm greetings to all Indians in Kuwait and congratulated all Indian artists in Kuwait who worked tirelessly for several weeks to make 'Namaste Kuwait' a mega cultural event, a reality.

He recalled his visit to Kuwait in September 2019 where he was warmly received by the Indian community in Kuwait. He said that he has been in constant touch with the leadership in the region and is pleased with the forward looking dynamic transformation of bilateral engagement with the region, which is a part of India's extended neighborhood.

He mentioned the successful 'Vande Bharat Mission' undertaken by the Government of India, which helped hundreds of thousands of Indians to return back to India during the pandemic. He also recalled the close bilateral partnership during the COVID-19 crisis wherein India and Kuwait supported each other extensively. During those difficult times, India dispatched an emergency medical team to Kuwait. As 'Pharmacy of the World', India also supplied 'Made in India' vaccines to over hundred countries in the world including to the friendly State of Kuwait during the pandemic. Kuwait also emerged as one of the largest suppliers of liquid medical oxygen to India, with India establishing an air-sea bridge, including six naval vessels and a fleet of air force

planes to ferry the medical supplies from Kuwait to India.

He remarked that India and Kuwait share a historical relationship, which has blossomed into mutually beneficial multifaceted long-standing dynamic partnership. He highlighted the contributions of the Indian diaspora to build an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India, as envisioned by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. He also mentioned that India has become the fifth largest economy in the world. He urged the Indian diaspora to join hands with 1.3 billion Indians back home to achieve the target set by Hon'ble Prime Minister for 'Amrit Kaal' — the next 25 years till India celebrates its independence centenary in 2047, "when India shall become developed, free of colonial mindset, proud of its heritage, united and integrated and an India whose citizens put duty above all," said the minister. In his concluding remarks, Minister Muraleedharan invited the Indian diaspora to join the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrations in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India in January 2023.

For his part, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, His Excellency Sibi George in his opening remarks thanked the minister for inaugurating the event. He highlighted that 'Namaste Kuwait' event was a celebration of the vibrant and dynamic partnership between the two friendly countries, India and Kuwait, which is built over strong foundations and nurtured by vibrant

people-to-people connect and civilizational affinities over centuries based on mutual trust and respect.

He pointed out that the New India-New Kuwait partnership will connect the visions of the leadership of the two friendly countries for mutual development. He recalled that the year, 2021-22, was a year of remarkable significance in bilateral relationship since it was a unique confluence of the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kuwait and the 75th anniversary of the independence of India

During his speech, Ambassador George highlighted that India is one of the oldest, largest and continuous major civilizations of the world. He stressed that yoga and ayurveda have become the symbols of India abroad, and India is proud of its unity in diversity. He thanked the Indian community associations, dance schools, Indian artists and children who showcased Indian culture and heritage. He also appreciated the Indian diaspora's dedication, commitment and their love for India. He thanked various Indian community members and Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) for supporting the event.

The event witnessed a footfall of thousands of people throughout the day and enthusiastic response with people from different walks of life in Kuwait participating virtually as well. President of ICSG Rajpal Tyagi delivered the vote of thanks to conclude the mega event.



Laos takes over new chairmanship of ASEAN Committee Kuwait



STAFF REPORT

ASEAN Committee Kuwait (ACK) held a handover ceremony on Thursday at the Crowne Plaza Hotel marking the end of tenure of Indonesia and the taking over of the new chairmanship by Laos.

Addressing an exclusive gathering of the ASEAN diplomatic community and media, Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Lena Maryan, extended her appreciation to the Deputy Assistant to the Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Abdullah Turki Al-Turki, for taking time to attend the event and also thanked him on behalf of the ASEAN Embassies in Kuwait.

Ambassador Maryan thanked the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the continued support given to the ASEAN Committee in promoting the culture and solidarity through program held throughout the year.

In his address as the new chairman of the ACK, Ambassador of Laos H.E Boun Inthabandith, assured the committee that he would do his best to promote

and advance the interests of the ACK and implement all programs and activities.

ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967, and this year marks the 55th anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. Currently, ASEAN consists of 10 member states, with a population of more than 670 million people, comprising different cultures, languages, and religions.

Notwithstanding these differences,

the bloc has coexisted and cooperated in the spirit of unity in diversity, thereby making ASEAN a successful regional organization with tangible achievements on many fronts. Notably, a region of long-lasting peace and stability, and economic resilience making it the fifth largest economy in the world. These have also enabled ASEAN to integrate into the regional and global economy, which has

contributed to social development as well as the improvement of the livelihood of the ASEAN peoples.

The success of ASEAN has been recognized internationally, particularly ASEAN's Centrality, its leading role, and the ASEAN Way of consensus, which serve as the fundamental principles that ensure its success, as well as guide its external relations.



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Thought for the week

“ A fact is information minus emotion. An opinion is information plus experience. Ignorance is an opinion lacking information. And, stupidity is an opinion that ignores a fact.

- Anonymous

Eating raw liver

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Last night, spending some time talking about raw liver while having dinner pushed me to share this article with you. It is interesting to know that people can be concerned about some food I do not usually pay attention to.

There is a lot of debate concerning eating raw liver. Some people claim it is full of essential vitamins and minerals and we should consume it at least three times a week, others say it is not recommended as it can be dangerous to our heart and kidneys.



I was also surprised to know that people can have raw liver for breakfast. I guess it is a matter of culture and taste.

In many societies liver is considered the most nourishing food on the planet. It contains more nutrients than any other food. More importantly, it is loaded with Vitamin A that helps promote healthy vision, fertility in males and females, and allows proper embryonic development.

Vitamin B12, Iron and Folic Acid are also very important

for people who suffer from anemia, so raw liver is a perfect cure for them, and the best thing is eating raw liver once or twice a week.

However, as you may know, raw liver is high in cholesterol, so if you suffer from high blood cholesterol levels and anemia at the same time, then here is the debate. In that case you need to focus on plant protein foods like grains, lentils, beans, and green vegetables like rocca and spinach, that are mainly high in iron, and have no cholesterol.

Also, you should be really aware of the source of the meat you are buying. But still, the best way to eat raw liver is to freeze it for 14 days to avoid any parasitic infection.

On a cautionary note, it is important for pregnant women to avoid any raw food.

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www.eatlikemira.com.



Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to infotimeskuwait@gmail.com

RECIPE

Aloo-Cauliflower Paratha



An Indian flat bread stuffed with a combination of potatoes (aloo) and cauliflower, the aloo-cauliflower parathas are a household staple in many places and make an ideal lunch-box filler that can be relished with pickles and yogurt.

Total time : 30 minutes.

Serving : 6/7 parathas

Ingredients:

*For the dough:

- 2 cups wheat flour + extra for dusting
- oil to taste
- salt to taste

*For the stuffing:

- 1 cup boiled, peeled, mashed potatoes
- 1/2 cup grated cauliflower florets
- 1/2 tsp carom seeds
- 1 tsp ginger green chili paste
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp coriander powder
- 1/2 tsp chat masala powder
- 2 tbsps coriander leaves



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Instructions:

*For making dough:

- In a mixing bowl add wheat flour, salt and knead into a soft dough with enough water. Add the oil and knead again to a pliable dough
- Divide the dough into six equal parts and set aside (The dough should not be too tight or too loose)

*For making stuffing:

- Heat the oil and add the carom ginger-chili paste and the cauliflower and saute for 2 to 3 minute
- Add turmeric, red chili, coriander powders and salt to taste
- Mix well and cook for 3 minutes over low flame
- Add chat masala powder, give a quick stir and switch off the flame
- Add coriander leaves and mix well and set aside to cool slightly

Making parathas:

- Divide the aloo-gobi stuffing in six equal portions and set aside
- Roll out each portion of the dough into a circle by using flour
- Place a heaping of aloo-cauliflower stuffing in the center, bring together all sides in the center and seal it tightly
- Roll out again into a circle using a little wheat flour
- Heat the tawa and cook the paratha on medium flame using a little oil till both sides have golden spots
- Repeat steps to make more parathas.
- Serve hot with pickles, yogurt.

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

More employees seek mid-career job switching

A new survey conducted in the region reveals that over 71 percent of respondents to the poll were contemplating changing their career, and 42 percent saying it was easy to change jobs in the region given the current demand for experienced employees.

The survey conducted by Bayt.com – the Middle East's #1 Job Site also showed that reasons for seeking a shift in jobs were not solely related to better remuneration, 37 percent of respondents said they were changing their profession "to find their real passion"; 33 percent said it was to challenge themselves, and only 18 percent said that better compensation was the prime driver for their shift in jobs, while 12 percent said it was enter an industry with a higher hiring activity.

While many professionals change employers, they often tend to remain in the

same (or very similar) occupations, but the survey revealed that nearly half (49%) were open to working in an entirely different field, whereas 51 percent admitted it was important to work in the same field of specialization, a skills and experience could be carried over to the new company.

According to the survey, the biggest challenge to switching work to a completely different field was the inability to transfer skills and relevant experience to the new firm (41%); finding relevant jobs in another field (27%); understanding a new industry or job role (18%) and recreating CV and cover letter (14%).

A majority of respondents (51%) believe that it is always important to obtain additional education/ training before changing careers; 38 percent believe it is important in some cases and 11 percent believe it is not

important to gain new skills before switching jobs. However, when professionals have the skills that are vital for businesses to succeed, a world of new possibilities opens up to them.

Today's workforce may be more mobile but they still are strategic and thorough about the process of switching careers, as 16 percent of respondents said they believe in remaining in their current role for at least a year before they switch to another one; 26 percent believe they should stay between one and three years; 29 percent think they should stay between three and five years before making the change, while 30 percent said, "It doesn't matter" how long you stay in one job.

According to the respondents, the initial step in successfully switching careers is to create a new CV for the target industry (50%), learn new skills (22%), assess whether



the switch is a practical option given past experience (17%) and research the market trends and opportunities (11%).

MoI mulls raising salary bar for family, dependent visas

Ministry of Interior (MoI) is reportedly considering issuing a decision to raise the minimum salary for a family or dependent visa (Article 22 visa) to KD800, from the current KD500. The decision is likely to be implemented soon, and will be applicable to all expatriates who hold Article 17 visa (government sector) or Article 18 visa for the private sector.

Applicants will be obliged to submit

their original work permits, and any records indicating that they have obtained an additional salary from another party will not be honored, including additional salaries entered in their bank accounts through other channels.

The new approach stems from the ministry's keenness to control the demographic structure and enable the high-income sectors to bring their families, as long as they provide them with



a satisfactory standard of living without urging their spouses to search for work and involving them in the already overcrowded labor market.

Moreover, the decision will include application for dependent visas for wives and for children who are under 16 years of age, who have entered the country recently, as well as for the father, mother and mother-in-law of the applicant.

EPA sounds alarm on state of landfills

Environment Public Authority (EPA) has once again sounded the alarm on the dangers of what it called "indiscriminate disposal" of waste, especially solid waste, in landfills across the country.

The authority noted in a recent report that despite the small land area of Kuwait, the country has a relatively large number of landfills. The report noted that Kuwait has 19 landfills spread across the country, of which only six are active and two are currently being used for municipal waste.

The report revealed that the six landfills currently in operation, received 75 percent of the total waste over the past decades, and that together these active landfills are responsible for generating the obnoxious gasses polluting the air over Kuwait, while only three landfills produce 96 percent of all emissions in the country.

The remaining 11 landfills have been closed, as they contain between them an estimated 56 million cubic meters of waste.

The report pointed out that the heavy accumulation of waste and indiscriminate disposal of dangerous material have contributed to the emission of toxic gasses and generated unpleasant odors, and that they remain a potential cause for outbreak of fires, which then produces dangerous smoke that negatively affects the health and wellbeing of citizens and residents in the country.

The EPA stated that the landfills at Jahra, the one to the south of the Seventh Ring Road, and the third one at Mina Abdullah, only weigh the incoming waste and then dump it in the landfill without any prior treatment. Highlighting that around 96 percent of the total gasses are emitted from these three sites, the report added that the country's 'National Waste Management Strategy for 2040' includes a clause to prevent the dumping of untreated waste with 'high organic content' in landfills, which is expected to contribute significantly to climate protection.

The report further indicated that the 11 landfills that have been closed were shut down without proper rehabilitation of the 56 million cubic



meters of waste they contained. As a result of this unsystematic and perfunctory closure these landfills will continue to emit greenhouse gasses and form leaching water and chemicals that will percolate down and contaminate the country's limited groundwater.

The EPA called for urgent measures to monitor these closed sites and rehabilitate the waste they contain in a proper manner in order to avoid these sites becoming an environmental hazard in future. The report also noted that the possibility of reusing the land that had been closed landfills is limited due to the uncontrolled emissions of gasses, which pose a danger from the outburst of a fire or explosion. Additionally, the decomposition of waste under the land makes the ground unstable and could cause soil subsidence.

The authority, in particular, pointed to the landfill in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, which lies adjacent to Kuwait International Airport where expansion work is currently underway. While noting that this expansion work will necessitate taking into account the conditions of the landfill site, the EPA underlined that this landfill is designed in a systematic manner. "It is engineered and equipped with an isolation system to prevent the intrusion of hazardous materials into the soil, and the materials entering it are being recorded and samples taken to check their properties. Moreover, there is the possibility of the dumped waste becoming a potential source of energy because it contains methane gas," said the EPA.

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Five government entities utilize majority of project spending

Seventy percent of spending earmarked for development projects in fiscal year 2022-23 are garnered by just five government entities, shows a new report.

Of the total KD1.27 billion set aside in the budget for development spending, around KD887 million (70%) is utilized by five government agencies led by the Ministry of Public Works and followed by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, the Ministry of Health, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, and Kuwait University.

A breakdown of the numbers show that 34.5 percent of spending, equivalent

to KD439.75 million, was garnered by the Ministry of Public Works; a further 20.5 percent of spending expenditure, equivalent to KD260.4 million was for the Public Authority for Housing Welfare; and in third spot was Ministry of Health which accounted for 13 percent of the total spending at KD162.22 million. Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries were fourth with KD139 million or about 11 percent of total spending, bringing up the rear of the top five agencies that spend the bulk of project budget was Kuwait University, accounting for 7.88 percent of total spending at KD100.3 million.



In terms of the number of projects being executed in fiscal year 2022-23, the list was led by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and

Renewable Energy with 19 projects worth KD23.4 million, followed by the Ministry of Health in second spot with 11 projects at an estimated cost of KD162.2 million, and in third place was the Ministry of Public Works with nine projects worth KD439.75 million.

The Public Ports Authority, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the National Center for Education Development: ranked fourth, as each of them had seven development projects, worth an unspecified amount. The Public Authority for Housing Welfare was fifth with six projects worth KD260.39 million.

POLO-OWWA reintegration program a huge success

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

The Reintegration Program of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (POLO-OWWA) ended its one-month satellite seminars held at the function hall of Chow King Restaurant in Salmiya last week.

The event, which was attended by more than 200 participants, was organized by CEE Network Kuwait in collaboration with POLO OWWA under the patronage of the Philippine Labor Attaché Nasser Mustafa.

The half-day seminar introduced the services and privileges that were offered by POLO OWWA to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) deployed in

Kuwait. A senior administrative staff of OWWA, Sheilanee Mamuric, delivered the four week seminars during which OFWs were informed and were able to raise their questions regarding details of the services, most of which were focused on loan and scholarship availability. Country Official of the Philippines' Social Security System in Kuwait, Jeremy Redulla, also gave two consecutive weeks detailing the OFWs privileges. OWWA also provided collecting officers for OFWs who wished to renew their contributions and update memberships. The fourth and last week was attended by fitness and gym trainers with aerobics and Zumba coaches.

Present in the events were Welfare Officers Genevieve Ardiente Aguilar,



Emmanuel Santiago Diaz and Louella Marie Calanza. Collecting Officers were Liwayway Ferrer, Robert Ryan Sison and Alex Gelloano. The event was sponsored by Abrar Skin, Dadabhai Travel, Grantos Clinic, Jane's Closet, Eitha Marzouk Al Azmi Recruitment Agency, Berlin Recruitment Agency,

Pag Ibig Fund and D' Queen Inasal Restaurant.

Filipino Social Media influencers present were DJ Lakwacha Balitang OFWs, Uptown Goddess, Jass Online Radio Station Kuwait, Ricky Laxa Reports, GMA News and Public Affairs and The Times Kuwait. Plaques

of Appreciation were given to the sponsors, while participants received their certificate of participation from OWWA officials. OFWs were thankful for such a project from CEE Network and urged the organizer to bring more such activities that can help OFWs gain knowledge and develop their skills.

The Reintegration program will resume in October till December and will be fully sponsored by a generous donor company. CEE Network will announce details in the coming week. For more details of CEE Network's activities and projects; Please call, 55650296 or follow us: FACEBOOK: CEE Network Kuwait / INSTAGRAM: ceenetworkculinaryarts / TIKTOK: ceenetworkculinaryarts / TWITTER: ceenetworkculinaryarts

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Lusail Stadium

- Crown Jewel of FIFA World Cup 2022 -

World Cup 2022 fixtures at Lusail Stadium

The World Cup 2022 in Qatar is the first world football event to be staged in the Middle East, which means the excitement - and scrutiny - will be greater than ever.

Hosting the tournament will put the focus on not only the culture and population of the region, but also on cutting edge technology and innovation that has been used to build stadiums that will allow matches to take place in a climate-controlled environment.



Air-conditioned vents throughout stadiums, minimal travel between venues and excellent connectivity to neighbouring countries such as Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia and European destinations are just some of the salient features that will set this World Cup apart.

The World Cup will begin on November 20 with the final scheduled to take place on December 18. In all, eight venues in Qatar will host the tournament.

The 80,000-capacity Lusail Stadium is the crown jewel of the tournament, and will also host the final.

The other venues that will host matches are Stadium 974, Al Thumama Stadium, Al Bayt Stadium, Khalifa International Stadium, Ahmed bin Ali Stadium (Al Rayyan), Education City Stadium, and the Al Janoub Stadium (Al Wakrah).

As we build up towards a unique World Cup - which is right in the middle of European football's regular seasons - we look at each of the eight venues that will play host to teams and fans from all over the world.

Lusail Stadium

The stadium is the biggest in the country with a capacity of 80,000, which is why it has been earmarked to host the final.

According to the tournament website, the shape and facade of the venue is inspired by the motifs on bowls, vessels and other art pieces found across the Arab and Islamic world.

After the tournament concludes, the Lusail Stadium is set to be turned into a community space including schools, shops, sporting facilities and health clinics. Also, most of the stadium's 80,000 seats are set to be removed and donated to sporting projects.

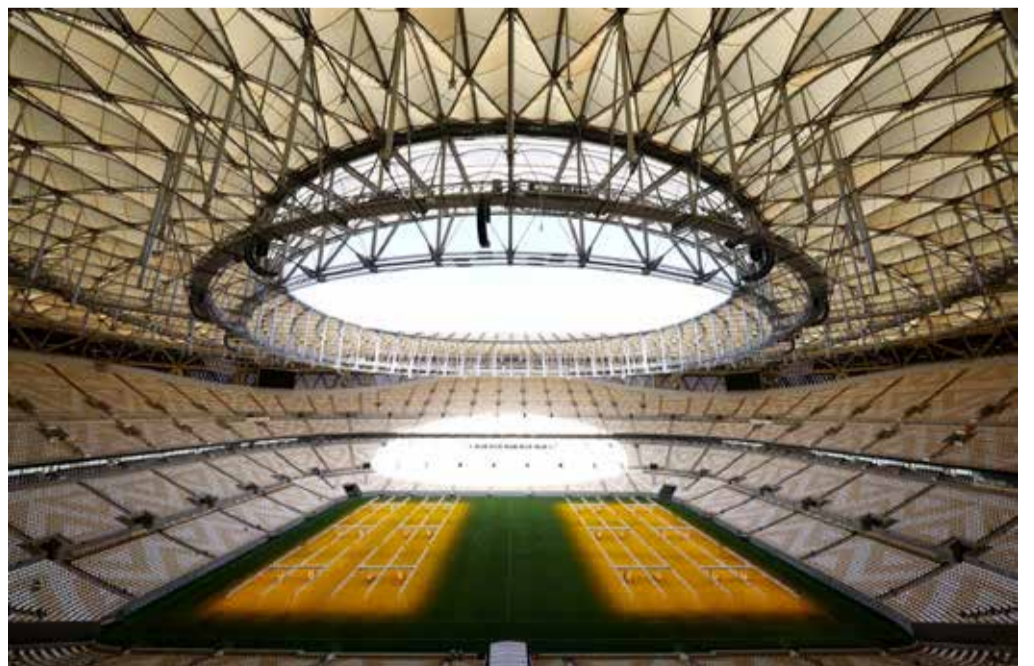
Tuesday, November 22:
Group C, Argentina v Saudi Arabia (1pm Kuwait time)
Thursday, November 24:
Group G, Brazil v Serbia (10pm)
Saturday, November 26:
Group C, Argentina v Mexico (10pm)
Monday, November 28:
Group H, Portugal v Uruguay (10pm)
Wednesday, November 30:
Group C, Saudi Arabia v Mexico (10pm)
Friday, December 2:
Group G, Cameroon v Brazil (10pm)

Round of 16
Tuesday, December 6:
Match 56, Group H winner v Group G runner-up (10pm)

Quarter-finals
Friday, December 9:
Match 57, Match 49 winner v Match 50 winner (10pm)

Semi-finals
Tuesday, December 13:
Match 61, Match 57 winner v Match 58 winner (10pm)

Final
Sunday, December 18:
At Lusail Stadium (6pm)



Nepal celebrates National and Constitutional Days



Ambassador of Nepal H.E. Durga Prasad Bhandari hosted a reception at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on 20 September on the occasion of Constitution Day and the National Day of Nepal. Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sami Abdulaziz Al Hamad, was the chief guest of the event. An exclusive gathering of diplomats, businessmen and well-wishers attended the event to mark the historical occasions.

In his welcome address, Ambassador Bhandari expressed gratitude to all the invitees for their gracious presence at the event, which was being held after two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic that had affected all social activities adversely.

He congratulated the Nepali community residing in the country and extended best

wishes for their welfare on this special day.

Ambassador Bhandari also shed light on the salient features of the constitution

of Nepal promulgated on 20 September 2015 that turned Nepal from the centralized unitary governmental system into a federal

democratic republic and added that the National Day of Nepal is being celebrated to mark this historic Day from the year 2016.

Ambassador Bhandari also expressed satisfaction over the recent developments in air connectivity between Nepal and Kuwait and also elaborated on Nepal - Kuwait relationship noting that these relations are always cordial and friendly and added that the year 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He further said that this important milestone year is being celebrated with a number of activities.

Cultural performances by local Nepali artists were also held and a short video prepared by the Nepal Tourism Board was also presented during the program.



IKEA celebrates the extraordinary at the Ordinary



Inspired by the vision to create a better everyday life for everyone, this year, IKEA starts celebrating the best in life: the everyday. The ordinary moments at home that create extraordinary memories.

During an event that took place at IKEA the Avenues, IKEA launched yesterday the Extraordinary at the Ordinary movement. Marino Maganto, CEO of IKEA Al Homaizi for Kuwait, Jordan and Morocco accompanied by the rest of the management team, shared with us this exciting news;



"Over the last couple of years, we have spent more time than ever at home with our dear ones. We have learnt to repurpose our homes for many different activities and to work from home while parenting. We have overcome many challenges together, and now, we recognize the importance of our homes more than ever before," said Maganto.

"This year, more than ever, we want to bring joy and happiness to people. We want to share positive energy around us, we want to make

this year extraordinary for everyone with The Extraordinary at the Ordinary movement! This movement is born to help everyone have a better life. It starts here and now. Whether you work with us, or not, whether you visit us or not, whether you ever shopped with us or not, there will always be something for you in this movement," Maganto added.

"We believe that 'Home' is the most important place in the world. By creating a better life at home, we contribute to a better life for everyone. You are the one that defines what better means, and we are there to help you make it a reality."

"To create a better home, we visit thousands of homes every year to understand the many needs, frustrations and challenges of everyday life. We gather all these insights and incorporate them in everything we do; from designing our range, to creating the beautiful value for money solutions that you know and love. This competence in life at home makes us unique. We want to share all this knowledge with everyone" Maganto continued.

"We believe that a 'Better Home' is not primarily about how things look but rather about how they feel. A better home must always be functional, make you feel good and of course, it has to be beautiful and make you proud. This is why we are starting this movement with The Functional Home."

"The Functional Home is the first one of a series of Solutions that we will launch this year to help you have the home that you always dreamed of.

What do we mean by "The Functional

Home"? The Functional Home is based on the needs and activities that you and your family do at home. It must be welcoming, family friendly, comfortable, practical and personal. The Functional home evolves with you adapting to the changes that happen in your life. The functional home makes room for your memories. We believe that The Functional Home is possible for anyone to afford and make it a reality. Maganto explained.

So, how can we all make it a reality? Where do we start? To start sharing everything we know, we have created our IKEA Extraordinary at the Ordinary Magazine. This magazine is born to help you make your ordinary everyday not only better, but extraordinary!

Whatever our lifestyle or the size of our home, we all need and want a functional home. So we have decided to dedicate the full first issue.

In the magazine, you will find lots of inspiration and recommendations to help you have a better life. From the easy steps needed to set up any space, to lots of tips and ideas to make it really functional. Or help you choose what are the best colors to give it the right mood for work, relax or just have fun. How to live a healthier and more sustainable life has become a top priority for everyone. We help you with easy to prepare healthy recipes, or small routines that will make a big difference on your day.

To complement all these, we share beautiful and functional solutions that are unique and would feel just right for you. And of course, they are value for money and easy for you to

have at home when you need them.

Maganto also confirmed: "We will publish many more magazines, with the different homes that we believe people dream of"

With this movement we want to be closer than ever to the people. We want everyone to interact with our brand in an exciting and fun way. We want people to be excited about every contact they have with IKEA, wherever they are, whenever they want.

To conclude, Maganto emphasized the key role that the IKEA stores play in this movement: "The key for all these beautiful inspirations and ideas to become a reality are our customer meeting points. Here is where everything comes to life. We want to turn our stores into places that everyone talks about with experiences that everyone wants to be part of. In the IKEA stores we will do workshops, talks, presentations, competitions, games, all to inspire people and also, why not, to have fun". We want everyone to come to the IKEA stores to enjoy an exciting and new experience every time.

And, of course you will find all these and more on our IKEA Website, where you can also purchase all these solutions from the comfort of your home.

Stay tuned and follow us on our social media or visit any IKEA store for more news and updates about the Extraordinary at the Ordinary Movement.

For more information, please contact:
Ali Husain, Ali@ikea.com.kw - Tel.: +965 1840408 - Mob.: +965 97223513

KMA urges minister to rethink doctor transfers

Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) has urged the Minister of Health Dr. Khaled Al-Saeed to rethink his decision regarding the transfer of doctors from Al-Adan Hospital and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital to Al-Jaber Hospital. The association pointed out that the transfers were impacting the medical services provided at Al-Adan and Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospitals, besides increasing workload on remaining medical staff at these hospitals who are already under heavy work pressure due to the shortage of staff.

The association stressed that the development of medical services provided in any hospital should not be at the expense of the quality of health service provided in other government hospitals, or by putting

pressure on medical staff that have proven their dedication to performing their duties to the fullest.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Health took over ownership of Al-Jaber Hospital in 2018, and the intervening four years should have been more than enough to hire enough medical staff to operate the hospital efficiently. Lack of "clear and far-reaching plan of action" to operate the hospital by the ministry, as well as failure to appoint new medical staff over the past four years, cannot come at the expense of services at other hospitals, warned KMA.

The association said it had held several meetings during the past week with the Kuwaiti Internal Medicine Association, and



with a number of doctors affected by the planned transfer plan, who in turn confirmed their dissatisfaction with the implementation of these decisions.

For its part, the Ministry of Health made clear that over the coming period around 370,000 people living in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer area and in Hawally medical district who receive treatment at Al-Adan Hospital and at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital will be transferred to Al-Jaber Hospital, thus helping relieve pressure on medical staff working at these two entities.

According to the health ministry sources, around 170,000 citizens of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Health District will be transferred from Al-Adan Hospital to Jaber Hospital, while 200,000 people from the Hawally Health District who seek treatment at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital will now be transferred to Al-Jaber Hospital.

Doctors warn of burdening children with heavy school bags

With the start of another new school year, children, especially very young ones, can be seen carrying heavy school bags daily to and from school. Doctors and child specialists as well as social workers have long reported the negative impact these heavy bags have on the physical development of the child and on their attitude to going to school each day.

Voicing concern over the issue, Dr. Youssef Koleilat, an orthopedic consultant at Al-Seef Hospital, warned of the complications of the heavy weight of the school bag.

He explained that "the weight of the school bag should not exceed 10 percent of the student's weight, but unfortunately, we find that most students' bags often weigh more than 17 percent of their weight."

Elaborating on this phenomena, Dr. Koleilat said: "To find out what if your children's school bags are too heavy for their shoulders, look at them while they are carrying the loaded bag



— if they have to lean forward to balance the weight, it means the bag is too heavy."

He stressed that "if back pain persists and the child's back is curved, a doctor should be visited immediately." He also noted that "although some schools have lockers designated for each student, most students prefer to keep books in their possession, which increases the burdens on their backs."



KNPC launches 'Know your Rights' campaign

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), a subsidiary of state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC),

organized an awareness campaign for foreign workers employed in various contract projects for the company.

The two-day campaign, held under the auspices of the Complaints and Social Welfare Committee of KNPC, aimed to inform the workers of their rights in accordance with Kuwait labor laws and in line with the contracts concluded with them.

The campaign, held under the slogan 'Know your Rights', included field tours by the KNPC officials of housing sites provided by contractors for their workers in the Mangaf, Mahboula, and Shuaiba Industrial areas. During the meetings with the workers, committee members enquired of their welfare and informed them about their rights and what must be done to ensure obtaining them, as well as their duties and obligations.

The committee members also distributed introductory publications and posters in eight different languages — Arabic, English, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese and Tagalog — with the objective of putting across the message to the largest possible number of foreign workers.

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Technical glitches could delay launch of Dhaman Hospitals



The Health Assurance Hospitals Company (Dhaman) noted in a statement last week that based on the percentage of progress it has made so far, the company has reached a stage where it was ready to begin receiving expatriate patients at its facilities by the end of the year as scheduled. However, issues arising from exigencies not related to the company could

force a postponement of the launch.

Confirmation of the start of full-fledged operations at Dhaman Hospitals depends on getting necessary clearances from the ministries of Health, Interior and Public Works, as well as from the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) and Kuwait Municipality.

The hospital company pointed out that it had completed the logistical preparations to begin operations as of the coming December, since it has already opened four health centers in the past and the fifth health center is scheduled to open next month, and complete the number of health centers specified by the Health Ministry. Regarding the two hospitals that were specified in the contract, the company noted that it had finished equipping them with a bed capacity of 330 each, even though the contract was for only 300 beds each.

Despite its readiness and preparedness to begin operations by December, the launch is also dependent on several relevant government entities. The first is for the company to obtain the necessary medical licenses from the Ministry of Health for the more than 400 medical staff the company plans on hiring, including 150 doctors and 250 nursing staff and technicians.

These medical personnel also need to receive approval from the Ministry of Interior's Residence Affairs Department, and from PAM. In addition, the Ministry of Public Works has to link the Dhaman Hospitals to the main infrastructure services, such as the rain and sewage networks, in order to ensure the safety of operation and logistical systems.

Permission is also required from Kuwait Municipality to allocate land for expansion of the health care centers as the company

plans to expand its services, from the five centers that were specified in the contract bid to 15 such centers. The expansion plans were made necessary after follow-up studies revealed that five centers specified in the bid were inadequate to provide efficient services to the large expatriate population in the country.

Finally, there is also the additional hurdle of shifting expatriate workers currently working in the public sector to the new health insurance system, and this transfer is expected to take place only in a phased manner and will depend on the validity of their residence permits.

What all of this implies is that, despite the readiness of its hospitals and health centers, expatriate patients will have to wait longer than the end of this year to begin receiving treatment at any of the Dhaman facilities.

Arabian Sea Dialogue, a new dawn to India-GCC relations

COUNTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The GCC states are understandably keen to hedge their bets and are looking at pushing forward the idea of 'strategic autonomy', even as major powers involved in the region reassess their priorities. Amid this changing political paradigm in what is no doubt a historically fraught geographical region, the ASD 2022 will deliberate on how best the GCC can respond to this new security environment, and on how India can help in mitigating and stabilizing the challenges.

Investments, Financial Flows and Trade: The relationship between India and the GCC has fundamentally changed in recent years, with traditional trade in food and hydrocarbon supplies being supplemented by increasing economic and investment engagements. The recently concluded Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE, and a wider Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that is being negotiated with GCC, attest to this advancing relationship.

Additionally, the emergence of global value chains and supply chains has allowed the two regions to integrate further and reap the benefits of their comparative advantages. Against this backdrop, the Dialogue will ponder on how India and the GCC can reshape their economic relationship through the value chain approach, as well as how digital technologies can be harnessed to bolster the resilience of the supply chains in the region.

Climate Cooperation: The GCC region in particular is prone to vulnerabilities brought on by climate change related events. It will also decisively influence the regional geopolitical fabric and shape the choices facing India and the GCC nations in the years ahead. A shared strategy to deal with energy transition, and a renewed focus on green mobility and finance mobilization is considered essential for the success of the global fight against climate change. Sustainable investment choices will also affect the future of jobs and growth in the region.

The Dialogue is expected to discuss what guiding principles should define the evolution of India-Gulf climate cooperation, as well as which sectors should assume priority. The discussions will also focus on solar and wind power, and other renewable energy sources that can be harnessed to galvanize energy transition in India and the Gulf region. The gathering is also expected to ideate on how climate cooperation between India and the Gulf can be maneuvered to positively influence climate justice at the upcoming COP 27.

Youth, Inclusion and Innovation: The transformative potential of people in the

region is immense and well documented, with women and youth often at the forefront of such transmutations. As the world changes rapidly and in transformative ways, how India and the GCC engage, harness, and empower this constituency will determine and shape their collective future. Youth capital, inclusivity and innovation will be a focus of discussion at the ASD 2022, along with ways that India and the GCC can reorient their policies and practices to further promote gender equity and women leadership, so as to secure a shared prosperous future.

On the innovation front, while India has the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world and is among the top countries in producing unicorns — a startup company valued at over US\$1 billion — the GCC region has been aggressively leveraging technologies and innovation to create a new economic future. There is potential for unprecedented collaboration between India and the GCC in this domain. An India-GCC digital bridge that harnesses the knowledge, experience, and talent synergies can transform the region into a global ideas and innovation hub in fintech, edtech, healthtech, and frontier technologies. This collaborative approach can form the foundation of shared prosperity of the region and beyond.

The ASD 2022 also will explore how the synergies that exist, or can be nurtured, between India and the GCC could be leveraged to promote innovations that are social, sustainable and responsible. All three could involve structured innovations as well as more grass-roots originated ones built on India's famed 'Jugaad' — a term used to describe non-conventional approach to problem-solving that uses limited resources in innovative ways. Among the focus areas in which innovative solutions could be developed are, in ameliorating water scarcity, combating aridification, developing renewable energy, and in ensuring health and food security.

Additionally, the increasing investment and trade between India and the GCC will feature largely during the Dialogue and in discussions leading to the ASD 2022. Especially given that India's ties to the GCC in trade, investment, energy, manpower, political and food security among others have a tremendous potential for growth in the years ahead.

Data show that India's economic linkage with the GCC have increased steadily in recent years, in particular due to growth in hydrocarbon imports from the region. Total bilateral trade between India and the GCC in the 2019-20 period stood at US\$121 billion, of which Indian exports to the GCC, largely agriculture products, accounted for 34 percent, or around \$40.5 billion of the total trade, while Indian imports from the

GCC, largely hydrocarbon products, constituted 64 percent or \$80.5 billion.

According to the latest report from the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO), the apex body of India's export promotion councils, in the 2021-22 fiscal year that ended on 31 March 2022, Indian exports to the six GCC states increased by 44 percent to about US\$43.9 billion, compared to previous fiscal's \$27.8 billion.

Exports to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India's second largest trade partner and the largest in terms of exports soared to \$28 billion from \$16.7 billion in the 2021 fiscal. Moreover, the increase in exports was not limited to the UAE, exports to all six countries of GCC witnessed a hike in the last fiscal. In fiscal year 2021-22, exports to Saudi Arabia grew by 49 percent, Oman by 33 percent, Qatar by 43 percent, Kuwait by 17 percent and exports to Bahrain increased by 70 percent.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that India and the UAE signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February this year, which came into force only on 1 May 2022. The CEPA is expected to spur dramatic increases in Indian exports to the UAE in the years ahead, as 'zero-duty' access for Indian products to the UAE, is expected to expand over the next 5-10 years to 97 percent of UAE tariff lines, or 99 percent of Indian exports by value.

Latest available figures comparing Indian exports to the GCC before, during and after the global pandemic, also paints an interesting picture of how trade with the UAE has grown beyond just hydrocarbon imports by India, and how Indian exports have widened to encompass a multitude of products other than agriculture. The data reveals that exports from India to the UAE accounted for 49 percent of the total of \$59 billion in fiscal year 2019-20, before falling to 39 percent

of the total of \$43 billion in trade during the next fiscal due to the then prevailing global pandemic, before picking up again in fiscal 2021-22.

Clearly there is tremendous scope for trade between India and the GCC to improve even more, and in goods other than traditional hydrocarbons from the GCC and agricultural products from India. This is especially so, if the two entities enter into the long-awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that is currently being negotiated, or if the remaining five nations of the GCC ink separate Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA) with India similar to that with the UAE.

Compared to multilateral trade agreements such as an FTA with the GCC, bilateral trade agreements such as CEPA with the UAE, are negotiated more easily, because only two nations are party to the agreement. Bilateral trade agreements also reap trade benefits faster than multilateral agreements. However, new bilateral agreements often result in competing agreements between other countries, eliminating the advantages that a FTA confers between India and the GCC.

In addition, cooperation between India and the GCC has scope to widen beyond the traditional spheres of investments, trade and commerce, and the development of human resources, to support their shared desire for political stability and security in the region. The two are also well placed to strengthen cooperation in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the internet of things and the fourth industrial revolution, as well as in new frontiers such as in space and deep sea exploration, and renewable energy sources among others. Leadership in India and the GCC need to pursue the potentialities presented by the new world order.

MEW collects millions in payment arrears

Since the start of the fiscal year 2022-23 on 1 April of this year, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has collected over KD200 million in payment arrears, mainly from government entities.

Figures for the period from 1 April to 18 September show that the ministry collected a total of KD205,983,000. Of this amount, the government sector accounted for KD81.457 million, followed by the private housing



sector KD42.94 million, and the investment sector in third spot with arrears of KD31.51 million. Collections from the commercial sector totaled KD22.95 million; from the industrial sector KD16.85 million, and from other activities KD4.69 million. Meanwhile, at the bottom of the list is the agricultural sector, at KD1.58 million.

Rediscover Thailand with amazing new chapters of luxury



The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Dubai and Middle East office celebrated with a glamorous event at Elements Restaurant in Kuwait City under the theme of 'Rediscover Bangkok with Amazing New Chapters of Luxury' in partnership with Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok and Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok. The event highlighted luxury travel in Bangkok and, in parallel, the latest edition of a peaceful urban-oasis five-star resort-style properties dedicated to families at Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok and wellness at Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok.

Opening its doors in 2010, Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok is one of the leading luxury hotel providers in Bangkok. The five-star luxury city-resort sits on historical grounds that were once part of the Lotus Pond Palace (Sra Pathum Palace) commissioned by King Rama IV. The luxury urban-oasis resort is a dream destination for leisure and family travellers, combining comfort and convenience with the amazing shopping and entertainment attractions that are literally at your doorstep. The hotel has added seven animal 'Themed Family Suites' and has reimagined the design of 22 new pool-access 'Cabana' rooms and 'Duplex Cabana' suites,

to be revealed by mid November 2022.

Each 'Themed Family Suite' is named after a member of Thailand's animal kingdom and includes an attractive selection of games and entertainment for younger guests. "Inside each suite exists a sensory experience, where kids are invited to explore and create their unique 'den' which they can call their own while staying with us. We have created an environment in which children return to more conventional, interactive playtime experiences using drawing materials, board games and books," explains the hotel's Managing Director Richard Schestak.

"Guests staying in the elephant suite, for example, will learn much more about the lives of elephants in Thailand and why the elephant is a treasured and sacred beast in Thai culture."

The reimagined new designs of the 22 pool-access rooms, including the 'Cabana' rooms and 'Duplex Cabana' suites, will be revealed by mid November 2022. The new edition features a contemporary interior design that uses natural light to highlight the top-quality furnishings and décor in light tones of neutral shades.

Vice President Operations of South East

Asia and General Manager Adrian Rudin "Sindhorn Kempinski is a wellness landmark in the heart of Bangkok where you can just unwind by the seemingly endless infinity pool, indulge in transformative spa treatments to be revitalise and refresh as you look out on to the panoramas and greenery that surrounds the Hotel"

Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok and Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok are both leading luxury hotels in a peaceful urban oasis in the heart of Bangkok, combining the supreme comfort and convenience of a luxury city-centre staycation with all the tempting shopping, spa pampering, gourmet cuisines, cultural attractions and the world's leading hospitals at your doorstep.

Director of TAT Dubai Office Chaiwat Tamthai "We are so excited to welcome the Middle East tourist especially from Kuwait market which is one of our top spenders in the world with approximately 2,500 US\$ per trip with average stay of 8-10 days. There is no better time to showcase our new tourism products and services, as well as present our famous attractions in a new light which we would like to highlight Thailand as a well-known affordable luxury & trendy destination for Kuwaiti travellers in 2022/2023"



Armenia: Celebrating 31 years of Independence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"The Armenian community in Kuwait was established with its organized institutions in the early 60s of the past century, almost simultaneously with the State of Kuwait gaining its independence. Since then, the local Armenians have been actively involved in many areas of Kuwaiti social life, making a significant contribution to the prosperity of Kuwait. And this makes me incredibly proud every time I speak about the Armenians here.

"At the state level, Armenian-Kuwaiti relations were officialized in 1994 through establishing diplomatic relations. Armenia and Kuwait fruitfully cooperate in a variety of fields, including trade and economy, agriculture, science, education, culture etc. There is a sustainable political dialogue between our two countries, which is being enhanced and further developed thanks to the efforts of the embassies in both countries. Joint intergovernmental commission has been formed between Armenia and Kuwait. The intergovernmental commission is one of the main driving forces for our bilateral cooperation and we are working to organize the next session.

"In recent years, student programs between the Yerevan State University and Kuwait University have also become more active and popular. Meanwhile, tourist flow from Kuwait to Armenia has significantly increased, mostly due to Armenia's cancellation of the visa regime for Kuwaiti citizens. I am sure that there is still a huge potential for the development of comprehensive cooperation between our two countries, and we are directing our maximum efforts towards its realization."

Relating his personal experience, both as an ambassador and as an Armenian in Kuwait, Ambassador Baghdasarian stated: "What makes Kuwait so unique is its people. There is so much peace, solidarity and willingness

to help others here that you cannot help but be amazed by this country and its kind-hearted people. It is no secret that Kuwait already has the reputation of a great benefactor in the international arena, which, in my opinion, is one of the greatest assessments that can be given to a state.

"Kuwait has always stood out for its balanced policy and mediation in conflict reconciliation. In this sense, Kuwait is a unique state. As for Kuwaitis, they are the exact reflection and the bearer of the external image of their homeland. There is one more thing I would like to highlight about Kuwaiti society. It is the family relationships and the close ties between family members."

In reference to recent incidents of border skirmishes and outright wars between neighboring states, the ambassador said reflectively: "I am convinced that in the contemporary world, a country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and the right of its people to live peacefully and safely in their homeland should not be a subject of discussion, and even more so, should not be questioned or threatened.

However, I do not want to turn this conversation into a platform for political statements. I would just like to state that as with Kuwait, Armenia has always been committed to and strived for exclusively peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts through designated international formats and platforms. I also believe that the most important necessary step to achieve lasting peace is the desire and commitment of both sides to mutual respect for the inviolability of each other's borders and territories.

The Republic of Armenia reaffirms its commitment to the agenda of establishing peace and stability in the region, and calls on the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to intensify efforts to resume the work of this internationally mandated negotiation format. Peace cannot be achieved through the use of force or threats of any kind, said the ambassador in conclusion.

K-Companies reemploy retired senior staff



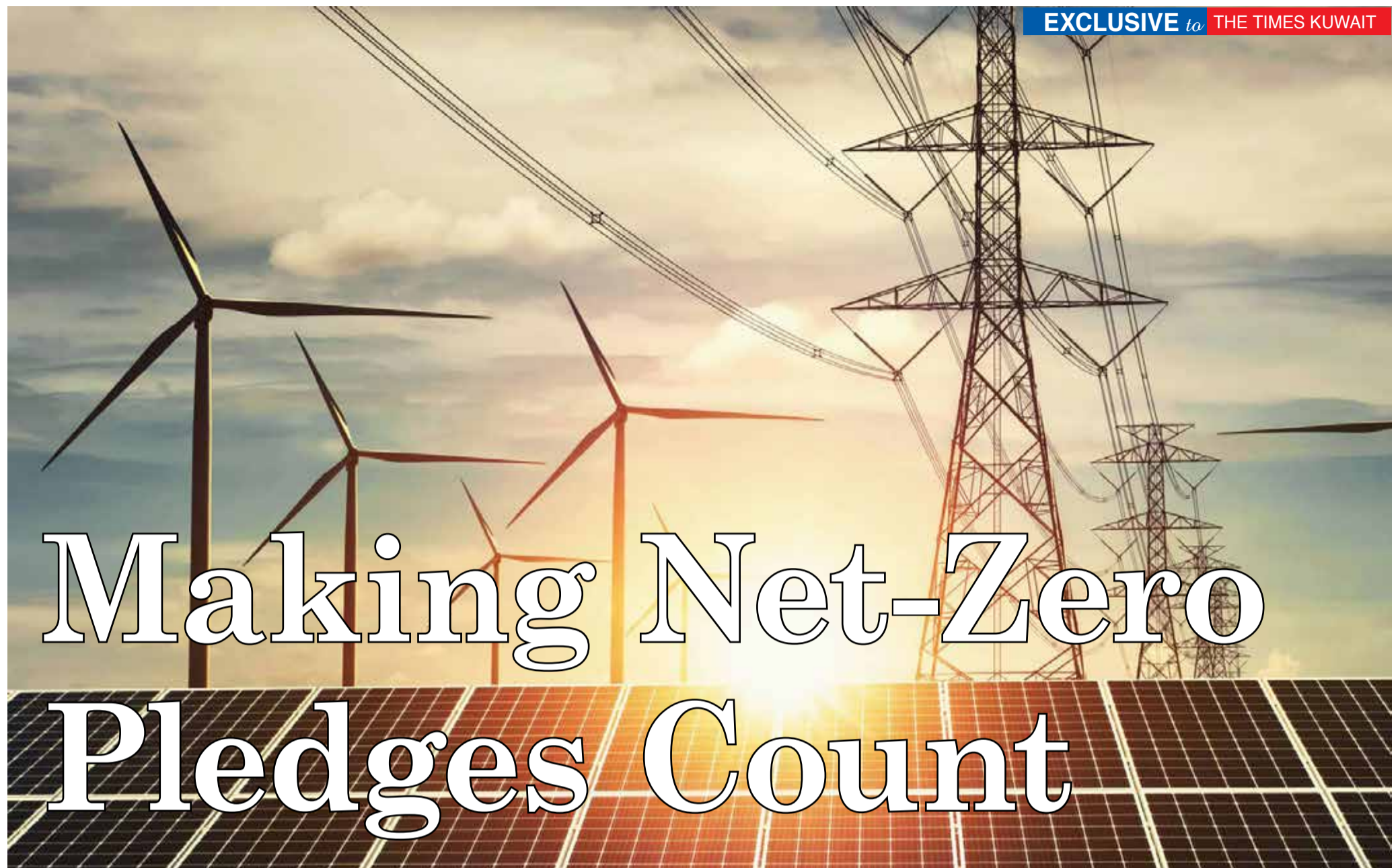
Several state companies affiliated to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) are reportedly circumventing the directive by the corporation's Board of Directors not to renew the tenure of senior officials in the oil sector. The board had decided earlier not to renew the tenure of those who have completed the legal age of 60 years, or those who have completed 35 years of service, in order to pump new blood and give the younger qualified generation a shot at senior positions. However, some of the oil companies affiliated to the KPC have found a way to get around this decision by re-appointing these employees who have been retired by finding them an opening with the contractors in the name of a consultant.

One former senior official working for the KPC subsidiary Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) was recently reappointed by a contractor as a consultant with many advantages after the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation refused to extend his tenure.

Surprisingly, this retired official is being allowed to exercise his previous powers, attend meetings and give instructions to the company's employees, despite being only a consultant to an outside contractor.

Similarly, another former senior official at KGOC who was in the Joint Wafra Tender Committee (JWTTC), was appointed on contract as a member of this sensitive committee. Clearly KPC needs to confront the attempts of some oil companies to circumvent the company's decisions.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Making Net-Zero Pledges Count



Catherine McKenna

Former Canadian minister of environment and climate change, is Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Expert Group on the Net-Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities.

Walking down a Toronto street recently I saw an ad touting a fossil-fuel company's net-zero credentials. But to see such belief-straining claims, I would not even need to leave my house.

According to a study by the Guardian and InfluenceMap, such ads are all over Google. Ads for oil giant Shell, for example, appeared on 86 percent of searches for 'net zero', with many promoting the company's pledge to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Are corporations finally waking up to the urgency of the climate crisis, or is this just more greenwashing?

One thing is certain: the climate crisis is escalating fast. California is enduring record-breaking heat waves. A third of Pakistan is under water. China is suffering a withering drought, which may have global ramifications. And that is just what is happening right now. From cold snaps in Texas to wildfires in Europe, climate change has become impossible to ignore.

Climate action has come a long way since the Paris climate agreement was signed in 2015. Notably, net-zero has gone mainstream, with some 90 percent of global GDP now covered by net-zero targets. And it is not just governments that have adopted them; many of the world's biggest companies have done so, too, motivated by a combination of business interest, investor

expectations, and consumer pressure.

But if corporations, including even fossil-fuel companies, are now 'climate leaders', fully and loudly committed to the net-zero cause, why are emissions still rising? A look at the history of climate action reveals the answer.

Over the last 20 years, a diverse array of climate initiatives has sought to persuade businesses and investors to accept the idea of setting climate-related targets, cutting emissions, and then setting even more ambitious targets. These initiatives have had one thing in common: all have been voluntary.

As anyone who has ever broken a New Year's resolution knows firsthand, a promise made is not always a promise kept. If someone says they

fully explained how it plans to achieve net-zero emissions.

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently put it, "The world is in a race against time, and we cannot afford slow movers, fake movers, or any form of greenwashing." These are the problems the High-Level Expert Group on Net-Zero Emissions Commitments, which I chair, is meant to solve. We are an independent, diverse group of experts determined to provide science-based recommendations for achieving the goal so many governments and companies have embraced.

Our work is just beginning, but three things are already clear. First, a pledge without a plan

for issues of equity and climate justice. Regional and sectoral standard-setters can then adopt our criteria, thereby ensuring consistency and comparability.

Second, voluntary schemes are not enough. We do not need New Year's resolutions; we need new business plans. Regulation will be essential here, both to ensure that voluntary climate roadmaps are replaced by mandatory strategies and to level the playing field. A central objective of the High-Level Expert Group is to map the needed regulations.

Finally, accountability is essential. When companies, banks, investors, cities, and regions make net-zero commitments, we must be able to trust them. Fair rules of engagement will help. But governments, corporations, and financiers must also embrace radical transparency. Progress will be easy to spot: investment in clean energy will supersede investment in fossil fuels, and emissions will fall.

Already, our expert group has engaged more than 800 groups, met with thousands of people, and received almost 300 submissions detailing how net-zero commitments can be improved — a clear indication of how keen stakeholders are to get this right. Success would not only give us a shot at stabilizing the climate; it would bring vast economic opportunities. According to McKinsey, growing demand for net-zero offerings could generate more than \$12 trillion in sales annually by 2030.

Last year, I left politics to dedicate my time to the two things that mattered most to me: my kids and climate change. The two priorities are deeply interconnected. If we are to avoid a future where our children are buying 'net-zero' bacon between floods and fires, we must close the gap between the promises we hear and the action we need.

“ We do not need New Year's resolutions; we need new business plans. Regulation will be essential here, both to ensure that voluntary climate roadmaps are replaced by mandatory strategies and to level the playing field. ”

will achieve net-zero, how can we be sure that they are taking the steps needed to deliver? Right now, we cannot.

This has enabled 'climate coasting', with companies marketing themselves as environmentally conscious while continuing with business as usual, or close to it. In fact, as it stands, only one in three corporate net-zero plans cover the company's full carbon footprint, including that of its supply chain. And not one of the world's biggest corporate polluters has

is meaningless. Companies need to align their business strategies with their commitments, take ambitious action, and start delivering progress immediately. And this does not mean fudging the numbers with questionable offsets; the only credible way to achieve net-zero is to slash emissions.

To support this effort, the High-Level Expert Group will define what it will take to achieve net-zero emissions. This includes establishing clear criteria for credible net-zero plans that account



Swapping social media with exercise reduces stress

Replacing 30 minutes of social media use per day with physical activity can enhance emotional well-being and reduce stress, say researchers behind a new study on the subject. While clicking on a social media link might bring a few moments of immediate gratification, the interest in physical activity was found to linger for over six months after the study ended.

Social media use soared during the lockdowns and contact restrictions imposed by authorities in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people all over turned to SMU to escape feelings of isolation, anxiety, and hopelessness. But this excessive screen time led to addictive behaviors among many people, including stronger emotional attachment to social media, and deeper mental anguish. Researchers at the Ruhr-

Universität in Bochum, Germany investigated the effects of reducing social media use (SMU) and increasing physical activity, or both, on emotional well-being and tobacco consumption. The researchers found that participants in their study who cut back on social media and exercised more experienced greater happiness and less stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reduced social media use also correlated with less tobacco consumption.

A follow-up on the participants six-months after the study revealed that they continued spending less time on social media, maintaining physical activity, feeling happier, and smoking fewer cigarettes.

For their study, the researchers recruited 642 healthy adult social media users and placed them in four experimental groups. The social media (SM) group had 162 individuals,

the physical activity (PA) group of 161, a combination group of 159, and a control group of 160.

Over two weeks, the SM subjects reduced their daily SMU time by 30 minutes and the PA group increased their daily physical activity by 30 minutes. The combination group applied both interventions, while the control did not change their behaviors.

The participants completed online surveys and 'daily compliance' diaries at the start of the trial, 1 week later, and after the 2-week period. They also submitted follow-up surveys at 1, 3, and 6 months post-experiment.

From the results at the end of the study, the research team concluded that their interventions helped people decrease the time they spend with SM. Even six months after the experiment, the participants had reduced their daily initial SM time by about 37 minutes in the SM group, by about 33 minutes in the PA group, and by about 46 minutes in the combination group. Moreover, participants reported having a decreased emotional bond with social media.

All the interventions encouraged more physical activity as well. "Six months later, our participants had enhanced their initial weekly physical activity time for 26 minutes in the SM group, for 40 minutes in the PA group, and for 1 hour 39 minutes in the combination group," the authors wrote. Even the control group increased their activity by 20 minutes.

Shortcomings to the study include that it lacked diversity, also the study did not consider which form of SMU the subjects were using or specify which type of physical activity the participants engaged in. The researchers hope that future work will focus more on these factors.



The researchers noted that mental health constitutes two distinct but interrelated dimensions — positive and negative. With this paradigm, they hypothesized that the positive dimension of their intervention would "increase life satisfaction and subjective happiness." The negative dimension would decrease "depression symptoms and addictive tendencies of SMU."

Doctors and psychiatrists point out that excessive social media use weakens social interpersonal bonds, which can negatively impact mental health. They note that the brain's reward system gets activated from clicking or scrolling or maintaining the use of social media. What the research demonstrated is that people need to be aware of this self-soothing aspect of social media use, and work to limit it by engaging in alternatives such as exercise that similarly activates the brain's reward system.

Exercise increases the production of neurotransmitters, the brain's natural antidepressants and anti-anxiety molecules. Consequently, more exercise can build mental health, while less activity due to social media overuse can curtail healthy brain chemistry.



Benefits of Plant-based Milk Alternatives

A new nutritional analysis on the mineral content in single base ingredient, plant-based milk products such as almond, cashew, coconut, hemp, oat, pea, rice, or soy, found that many of these alternatives have essential minerals equal to traditional dairy milk, with the added bonus of having lower cholesterol and fewer calories.

The new analysis detailing the mineral content of plant-based milk alternatives found among others that:

- Pea-based milk alternatives have the most phosphorus, zinc, and selenium
- Soy-based products have the highest amounts of magnesium
- Only pea-based and soy-based drinks had higher levels of the four essential minerals than cow's milk
- Pea-based drinks contain about 50 percent higher levels of phosphorus, zinc, and selenium than dairy milk.

The researchers said that these plant-based milk alternatives could be important sources of micronutrients for people trying to reach the recommended dietary allowances for them, while also keeping in mind any family allergies to ingredients in plant-based milk alternatives.

They hoped their study would help consumers make informed dietary decisions about plant-based drink products. But, making a healthy choice is often made difficult by the fact that micronutrients are rarely ever mentioned on the labels of plant-based milk products, as food labeling guidelines do not insist on their inclusion.

Researchers at the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) who were behind the current study analyzed samples from 85 milk alternative brands and found that mineral content varied significantly across different plant-based milk product types and between brands. The study team surmised that plant-

based milk such as legumes, pea, and soy have more mineral content than others due to its vast array of nutritional value. They also cautioned that just as there is wide variability in nutrient content in many food sources, the same may be true for non-dairy plant-based milk. Where and how these products are sourced could determine their micronutrient content.

Customers choose milk alternatives for a number of reasons, including their concern for the environment, issues with lactose intolerance, or their preference for the taste or flavor of non-milk alternatives. A standard labeling guideline would allow them to also make healthy choices with regard to the milk alternatives.

Here is a look at how different plant-based milk alternatives stack up:

Soy milk: Soy milk contains all the essential amino acids, which is similar to dairy milk. It is also cholesterol-free and low in saturated fat. But soy is also a common allergen and is not tolerated by everyone equally.

Almond milk: Almond milk is lower in calories than dairy milk, which may be preferred by adults trying to lose weight. However, this is not a good alternative if there are nut allergies present.

Cashew milk: Cashew milk has a creamy taste, which may be preferred over almond milk. It is also high in vitamin E, lower in calories, and fits well into a vegan diet. But, cashew milk has a low protein content, so it may not be helpful to meet a person's overall protein needs.

Rice milk: A relatively new entrant into the ranks of plant-based milk alternatives, rice milk is a good option if there are allergies to dairy, nuts, or soy products. However, rice milk contains a higher carbohydrate and calorie content, so may not be appropriate for someone following a calorie-controlled diet.

When it comes to choosing the right plant-based milk for you and your family, experts suggest looking at the nutrition facts panel and the ingredient list. For an everyday milk, choose one that does not contain any added sugar. Also, choose an option low in sodium and low in unhealthy fats; avoiding any added sources of saturated fats/dietary cholesterol (ie., no tropical oils, especially such as palm, palm kernel, or coconut oil. Look for products that do not contain sunflower or safflower oils, corn oil, vegetable oils). Opt for one that is also a good source of protein, meaning it contains at least 5 grams of protein per serving.

Also, parents should be aware that milk alternatives may not be appropriate for children during the first two years of their lives. At this young age, children require adequate calories, iron, and protein. In such cases, breast milk or formula are generally recommended over any milk alternative.

However, if the child struggles with intolerance to lactose from milk, it is reasonable to experiment with the various alternatives, but it is important to keep in mind the difference between them.

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