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New legislative term, an opportunity for a fresh start

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

In the midst of Ramadan fasting, on 4 April Kuwait once again went to the polls with citizens queuing in front of polling stations to cast votes for the 18th legislative term of the National Assembly. Despite election fatigue setting in among many voters at having to participate in the fourth election in as many years, engagement by citizens in the political process did not appear to have waned.

In his televised address to the nation on the occasion of the last 10 days of Ramadan, on Monday, 1 April, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of the upcoming general elections and noted that participation in it was a constitutional right and a national commitment. He urged voters to vote for candidates who would be their best representatives.

"As we approach the National Assembly elections on 4 April, I ask you to select the best representatives, and not those whose



objectives are personal gain or inciting crises, or undermining constitutional principles. Your wise selection is your path for the building of a future for your nation and for the generations to come," said His Highness the Amir.

Advising voters to reject those inciting division and sedition in society, His Highness the Amir said: "Do not betray your vote; ensure that the candidate you select is one who speaks words that satisfies the Almighty, uses language that avoids harming others, and does not aim

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Al Muzaini  **المزيني**
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Lithuania, Kuwait look forward to next 30 years of bilateral relations

On 5 April, Lithuania and Kuwait marked a significant milestone — the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. On this special occasion the Ambassador of Lithuania H.E. Ramnas Davidonis, in an exclusive interview with The Times Kuwait, reflected on the 30 years of successful friendship between Lithuania and Kuwait, and the opportunities that lie ahead for further boosting bilateral relations between the two countries over the next 30 years.



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The ambassador began by saying, "First of all, on behalf of the Embassy of Lithuania, I would like to sincerely congratulate Kuwaiti friends and partners on three decades of successful partnership between our countries. Since establishing bilateral diplomatic ties in 1994, our countries have seen impressive growth and fostered a mutually beneficial partnership across political, trade, educational, and cultural spheres.

"In this celebratory moment, it is a good time to explore new ventures for relations between our countries. The current geopolitical climate presents both challenges and opportunities for bilateral cooperation. Lithuania and Kuwait, united by shared respect for sovereignty, rule of law, and promotion of international cooperation, can leverage their experience and resilience to navigate these complexities. We commend Kuwait's involvement in aid and support for the Ukrainian people. Lithuania also echoes the call for political solutions for the situation in Gaza as a priority for stability and security in the region. This shared commitment creates a solid foundation for continued collaboration in the years to come."

Turning to economic relations between the two countries, Ambassador Davidonis noted, "Bilateral trade between Kuwait and Lithuania grows steadily each year, but there is a lot of space for improvement. Lithuanian businesses are discovering opportunities in Kuwait, especially in mainstream sectors like construction, design, architecture, agriculture, and food products. I believe we are yet to see the explosion of mutual projects and investments.

"Lithuania has much to offer, and we have a well-founded record of innovation, from co-creating the world's powerful scientific lasers to building nanosatellites. You might not have heard that Lithuanian lasers help to solve worldwide health and science problems and are widely used by NASA, CERN, and global technology giants like IBM, Hitachi, Toyota, and Mitsubishi. In addition, Lithuania is also known for incorporating the best of nature in state-of-the-art technology, from semiconductors to agritech and cleantech; we are looking for solutions for the future, and we see Kuwait's potential to be a part of it. This year, Lithuania

also celebrates 20 years of being a member of the European Union and NATO, which helped to accelerate the development of the business ecosystem.

In addition to strengthening economic ties, the ambassador also highlighted the immense tourism opportunities in his country. "Lithuania should be on the top of the list for people in Kuwait who love nature, calm greenery and healthy relaxation, mixed with culture, history and fun. There is so much to explore, especially in summer. More curious Kuwaitis might be surprised, but we also have a small desert of our own — the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO site with beautiful white-sand dunes and beaches, lush pine forests, and tranquil lagoons. Lithuania has something for every well-travelled tourist, be it history, festivals and celebrations, or relaxation and SPAs. FlyDubai will begin direct flights from Dubai to Vilnius in October 2024, this provides an excellent opportunity for Kuwaiti people to explore our beautiful country."

Elaborating on cultural exchanges between the two countries, the Lithuanian envoy said, "We appreciate that since 1990, Kuwaiti institutions have actively engaged in student exchange programs and provided opportunities for Lithuanians to study the Arabic language in Kuwait. This not only broadens the understanding of Lithuanian youth about Kuwait but also allows them to discover and learn about the region's history, culture, and customs in more depth.

There is also a growing interest from Kuwaiti students and the rest of the Gulf in exploring medical and biotechnology sciences in Lithuania. We are especially proud of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences — the largest higher education institution for



**Ambassador of Lithuania
H.E. Ramnas Davidonis**

biomedical sciences in Lithuania, successfully integrating higher education, research, and clinical practice. Students from 87 countries are training to become high-calibre scientists and academics, with opportunities to conduct R&D, collaborate with industry and the public sector, and implement innovations in clinical practice. Higher education diplomas from Lithuania's universities are valued by the best medical and research institutions in Europe, United States and globally."

Revealing a centuries-old cultural link between Lithuania and the Muslim world, the envoy noted, "One of the historical and cultural ties that Lithuania has with the Middle East is that a Muslim community has lived in Lithuania for almost 700 years. In the 14th century, the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas welcomed the Crimean Tatar community to his country, which allowed them to maintain their own

identity safely and honourably in the country for centuries. This muslim community was an integral part of building the Lithuanian state, especially in military expertise. Crimean Tatar experience and expertise were important in the path to restoring Lithuania's statehood in 1918, and in restoring the country's independence in 1991. The people of Kuwait are yet to discover this story and shared link, and it is one of my goals to make that link possible."

Expanding on the investment potential and opportunities for Kuwaiti investors in Lithuania, Ambassador Davidonis emphasized, "What differentiates Lithuanian business and investment ecosystem from the rest of Europe, and, I would say, from the rest of the world, is that Lithuanians are hungry for the future, agile, ambitious, and driven by big ideas. Our scientists and tech enthusiasts explore everything from gene and cell therapy to the latest in machine learning.

"The key sector to look closer for investment in Lithuania should be our startup ecosystem. We already have three unicorns, which turned out to be a global success in technology and circular economy. And there's 52,000 more, aiming to reach that level. We are also the fintech hub of Europe, with 147 licensed fintech institutions operating in the country. There is so much talent, openness, and exploration that we could only dream of thirty years ago. Thus, there are many opportunities for investment and collaboration."

As a non-resident ambassador to Kuwait, the Lithuanian envoy has had to shuttle between the UAE where he is based and Kuwait. Expanding on his thoughts about Kuwait, Ambassador Davidonis stated: "Every time I visit this beautiful country of Kuwait, I cannot help but remain fascinated by the will, resilience, and openness of Kuwaiti people. I see many new opportunities to explore for the next 30 years of bilateral relations between Lithuania and Kuwait, be it knowledge sharing in technology, mainstream trade, agriculture or people, culture, and education. I, personally, would love to explore Kuwait more, as it is a country of hidden wonders, with welcoming people and fascinating history. I see many historical parallels between our countries' struggles for independence. I am certain Kuwaiti people would also enjoy exploring the culture and history of Lithuania."





Eid Mubarak



MALT Excellence awards

The MALT Travel Awards have been presented based on the criteria and judging procedure adopted in selecting organizations/individuals for their exemplary role played in the field of MICE, Business, and Luxury Travel. This award is one of the most prestigious awards in the industry.

2024

2023



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Many Opportunities...One Address

MoE asks employees to adhere to computer usage rules



Employees at the Ministry of Education (MoE) have been asked to use the computers, printers and other attached peripherals issued to them in accordance with ministry rules on using these equipment. The ministry warned that failure to comply with the stipulated conditions and protocols could lead to legal charges being

levied against such employees.

In a bulletin circulated among employees regarding computer usage protocols, the ministry stressed the importance of adhering to national information technology governance policies that aim to ensure optimal device and program usage, as well as network and device security. Employees were reminded that computer and peripheral devices issued to them for work purposes are their responsibility and must be maintained accordingly.

Additionally, employees are strictly prohibited from altering operating systems, installing unauthorized programs, or using external storage devices without consulting technical support. Only technical support specialists are authorized to handle device maintenance to avoid voiding warranties.

The bulletin also pointed out that internet usage for non-work-related purposes is prohibited to safeguard network

confidentiality and prevent virus exposure. The ministry stressed that violating these guidelines exposes users to legal liability, and the ministry will take necessary measures and hold individuals accountable for any resulting financial losses.

The ministry also emphasized the need for specific education mechanisms to guide users on how to interact with devices, programs, and accounts, with the primary goal of preserving data security and confidentiality.



Lexus "The pinnacle of Luxury" wins Service Hero 2023

- **Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons and Lexus Kuwait won two distinguished awards namely: Lexus Top 10 Brands 2023 Award**

From Service Hero, the only indicator in the region to measure customer satisfaction, in a framework for Service Hero's efforts to foster a culture of service excellence where brands and customers thrive. Mr. Abdullah Al-Shuwaie, Group Manager, Legal Representative Customer Relations, and Engineer Sherif Sabry, Deputy General Manager, Lexus Service, received the two awards.

According to Mahmoud Abou-Zahr Senior Business Director Lexus Kuwait "Lexus always puts customers first and we ensure to give customers always the best facilities in terms of hospitality in addition to highly experienced service staffs and technicians. The exceptional reputation of ALSAYER along with our good network of service facilities all together have helped Lexus become best in Kuwait for car service".

In her remarks at the awards ceremony, Faten Abu-Ghazaleh, President of Service Hero, said: "Based on our 14-years of 250,000 validated customer assessments, 2023 scored the highest in customer satisfaction in Kuwait all 20 categories. This proves that customer satisfaction has finally become a strategic tool for brands to continue to earn the loyalty of their customers and improve their performance. In the past, brands were less focused on service excellence and more absorbed with sales and operations, but today, we see that has shifted to customer satisfaction taking a more central role."

The CSI measures three key service factors: expectations, overall satisfaction, and likelihood to recommend, as well as a number of service dimensions such as staff, location, product quality, value for money, speed, reliability, location, fixing complaints, call center, digital and delivery services. The highest scoring among these is location and delivery services while the lowest is value for money and speed of services.

"Over the years Lexus has transformed from a premium automotive brand to the pinnacle of luxury, this means the attention is always to every single detail and our standards of operation are of the highest standards. We continue to invest in the most advanced equipment and systems and always strive to develop our professional technicians on a consistent basis to take care of our customers' cars to the highest standards because our goal is to give customers an amazing experience with Lexus" added Mahmoud Abou Zahr

7 Star Model of Customer Service
All Lexus facilities in Kuwait embeds the

philosophy of "Customer as No.1" that was nurtured over the half century history in all related elements around auto business being sales, service, parts and second hand car at a very high level and it conveys the sense of "Top of Hospitality" grounded on the values of 7 star customer service that penetrates throughout each corner of the facility.

Through the 7 star customer service model, Al Sayer Lexus commits to relentlessly pursue customer service perfection in every endeavor, and as a team aim to provide our customers with a rewarding personal ownership experience that continually exceeds their expectations.



Research Methodology

The Index is based on 24,978 validated assessments by consumers spanning both male and female genders and a broad range of age, nationality, and education levels. Kuwaitis accounted for 28% of respondents in the survey and other Arab nationalities at 36%, while non-Arabs constituted the remaining demographic.

Based in Kuwait, Service Hero manages the only consumer powered customer satisfaction index in the Middle East.

The company is a member of ESOMAR and adheres to the global organization's principles and guidelines for self-regulation and ethical practice. Service Hero is overseen by an Independent Advisory Council to assure results that are impartial, objective, and accurately reflect consumers' preference, making the company's findings a credible benchmark that offers transparent and relevant insight for companies.

Prior appointment for biometric fingerprinting

Ministry of the Interior has urged citizens and residents to schedule appointments for biometric fingerprinting in advance using the 'Meta' platform available through the unified government app, 'Sahel'. The ministry added that the biometric fingerprinting centers will no longer accept 'walk-in' appointment

In a media statement, the General Department of Security and Media Relations stated that the "plan developed by the General Department of Forensic Evidence for fingerprinting appointments is adequate for everyone and will be completed before the specified deadline".

Commenting on social media reports of large crowds in front of one of the fingerprinting centers recently, the ministry stated that the "incident was dealt with immediately", and that the crowding was due to "the presence of a large number of people who arrived without a prior appointment."

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Merger among K-companies to cut costs, boost efficiency

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), the national oil company, is responsible for all upstream and downstream oil operations in Kuwait, and for its international operations. The company operates a tightly integrated supply chain through eight wholly owned subsidiaries, often referred to as the 'K-Companies' that oversee all operations related to the hydrocarbon industry in Kuwait.

The wholly owned KPC subsidiaries are the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), and the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOCC).

Media reports say that in recent years KPC has been actively pursuing a strategy aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Corporation and improving the operational effectiveness of its subsidiaries. As part of this strategy, KPC has been exploring the merger of its various subsidiaries and eventually reducing their number from eight to four. The strategy received a further boost in 2022, with the appointment of Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud as the Deputy Chairman and CEO of KPC.

Recent senior leadership changes at some of the subsidiaries are seen as a strong signal that the merger



processes could well be underway. The recent appointment of the CEO of KNPC, Wadha Ahmed Al-Khatib, as the acting CEO of KIPIC could be an indication that the merger of KIPIC under KNPC could be imminent.

The merger of KIPIC with KNPC is likely to be the first of many mergers expected to take place in the coming period. The planned mergers are expected to not only boost morale within the Kuwaiti oil sector, but also to cut costs, enhance operational efficiencies, and expedite the decision-making processes in the

country's oil, gas, and petrochemical sector. In 2020, KPC commissioned Strategy&, the global strategy

consulting team at PwC, to conduct a study on restructuring the oil sector. It is believed that this restructuring could yield significant long-term benefits for the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

Industry analysts say that the mergers could help boost the oil and gas project market, which in recent years has witnessed a sharp contraction in value. Between the beginning of 2020 and the beginning of May 2023, the total value of all active oil, gas, and chemical projects in Kuwait decreased by 65 percent, from \$67.1 billion to only \$23.5 billion.

It is hoped that the recent steps towards the planned merger

between KIPIC and KNPC will be a move away from the problems of recent years and will reflect positively on KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud. He previously served as the CEO of the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI).

In this capacity, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud was the main decision-maker regarding Kuwait's energy investments abroad, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period, by adapting to the complexities of the changing economic landscape in Kuwait during this period.



Al Muzaini Exchange Company Expands Presence with New Branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh

Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, the premier money exchange company in Kuwait, proudly announces the grand opening of its latest branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh. This strategic expansion marks a significant milestone for the company, bringing the total number of Al Muzaini branches across Kuwait to over 137.

With a relentless focus on customer satisfaction, Al Muzaini Exchange Company offers a comprehensive range of financial services, including money transfers, foreign currency exchange, and bill payments. The new branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh underscores the company's dedication to providing convenient, comfortable, and secure services at competitive prices, seven days a week.

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Koshary

A widely popular staple street food in Egypt, Koshary outlets can be found everywhere from high-end koshary restaurants to local street vendors. It is a filling meal to break the fast at Iftar during Ramadan.

Ingredients:

- 1 (400g) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 250g uncooked pasta
- 1 ½ cups short-grain rice, rinsed
- Cold water, to cover
- 1 ½ cups dark brown lentils
- water to cover
- 1 pinch salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (400g) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 tbsp butter
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 (80g) can French-fried onions

Instructions

- Combine chickpeas, vinegar, coriander, cayenne pepper, and cumin in a resealable bag or container with a

tight-fitting lid. Store in the refrigerator, while shaking occasionally.

- Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a rolling boil. Cook pasta in the boiling water until cooked through yet firm to the bite, about 8 minutes; drain and set aside.
- Combine rice with enough cold water to cover; allow to soak for 20 minutes. Drain.
- Meanwhile, combine lentils with enough water to cover in a pot; season with salt and pepper. Bring lentils to boil and simmer until tender, about 30 minutes; Drain.
- Heat olive oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat; cook and stir onion and garlic in hot oil until translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes; season with salt and pepper, reduce heat to medium-low, and maintain at a simmer.

Melt butter in a pot over medium-high heat; add rice, increase heat to high, and fry for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Pour in chicken stock and bring to a boil. Season with salt and pepper; reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until rice is tender, and the liquid has been absorbed, about 20 minutes.

Mix rice and lentils together on a large serving platter. Spread cooked pasta over the rice and lentil mixture. Serve with marinated chickpeas, tomato sauce, and fried onions.

Vermicelli Custard

Vermicelli custard, a simple and delicious milk pudding recipe made from vermicelli and custard powder, can be put together in minutes. It can be the perfect end to your family dinner, a great conversation starter for your friends' get-together, an ideal way to satiate your sweet cravings for the upcoming Eid festival. A delectable crossover of creamy pudding and flavorsome fruit custard, the exquisite dessert will have your guests asking for more

Ingredients

- 250 ml condensed milk
- 100 g chopped dried seasonal fruits and berries
- 6 tbsp melted butter
- 6 tbsp milk
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 6 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- For Coffee Soak (Optional):
- 2 tbsp coffee powder
- 8 tbsp water
- For Frosting:
- 150g dark chocolate
- 75g fresh cream

Instructions:

- Roast chopped dry fruits in ½ tsp ghee for 2 minutes

- Add ½ cup thin vermicelli and roast for another 2-3 minutes. Set aside once done
- Boil the milk and add roasted vermicelli and dry fruits mixture to it
- Cook on low-medium flame for 2-3 minutes
- Add the condensed milk and mix well
- Mix 2 tbsp custard powder in a bowl with ½ cup milk
- Add the custard milk slowly to the vermicelli mixture
- Cook for 3-4 minutes or until the mixture turns thick
- Turn off the flame and transfer to a bowl. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours.
- Transfer custard mixture to serving bowls
- Garnish with dry and fresh fruit pieces.

Tips for the perfect vermicelli custard:

- Always use cold or room-temperature milk to dilute custard powder. If you use hot milk, it will get lumpy.
- If your custard appears to be dry after cooling it in the fridge, add about 2-3 tablespoons of chilled milk and mix well.
- The best way to adjust this sweet dish's consistency is to ensure that the mixture neither pours off from the spoon nor sticks too much to it.



Sheer Khurma

Entice the taste buds of family and friends for the upcoming Eid Al-Fitr festival with the exquisite taste and flavor of sheer khurma, a dish that is believed to have originated in Iran. This vaunted dessert is more than just a sweet dish; it is the

warmth of family, of shared laughter, and stories around the table. It embodies the joy of giving and receiving blessings at Eid Al-Fitr. Prepared with vermicelli, ghee, milk, dates, nuts, and condensed milk, sheer khurma provides a warm and creamy goodness that weaves a tale of tradition and culinary delight with every spoonful.

Ingredients:

- 200 ml condensed milk
- ½ cup ghee (clarified butter)
- 750ml low fat milk
- 50g thin vermicelli
- 4 seedless dates
- 10 blanched and sliced almonds
- 10 cashew nuts
- 10 sliced pistachios
- 1 tbsp melon seeds
- 2 tbsp raisins

Instructions:

- Heat 2 tbsp ghee in a pan and fry the vermicelli until brown. Set aside

- Bring milk to boil, add the vermicelli and let it simmer over low heat until the vermicelli is soft and cooked.
- Add the condensed milk, dates and mix well
- Keep stirring the mixture until it thickens
- transfer the milk mixture to a bowl.
- Heat remaining ghee (2 tbsp) in a pan and add almonds, cashew nuts, pistachios, and melon seeds. Once the nuts and seeds turn brown, add raisins.
- Garnish the vermicelli mixture with the nuts and raisins.
- Serve warm.

Tips to ensure a perfect sheer khurma:

- Avoid finely chopping the nuts. Instead, slice them into thick pieces to prevent them from burning during roasting.
- Use full-fat milk for a rich and creamy texture.
- Take extra care when roasting vermicelli, nuts, and dry fruits. Once they are light brown, quickly remove them from the pan to prevent burning in the residual heat.
- The desired consistency of sheer khurma varies among individuals, so adjust the consistency by adding more or less milk according to desired preference.

Eid al-Fitr Getaways 2024



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

Eid al-Fitr is a joyous occasion celebrated by Muslims worldwide, marking the end of Ramadan. It is a time for families and friends to come together, exchange gifts, and enjoy delicious feasts. For many, Eid is also an opportunity to embark on a memorable getaway, exploring new destinations and creating lasting memories.

From the tranquil shores of Zanzibar to the bustling streets of Istanbul, these top Eid getaways and hotels offer luxurious accommodations and unforgettable experiences for travelers seeking a memorable holiday escape. Whether you are craving relaxation, adventure, or cultural immersion, these destinations promise to make your Eid celebration truly special.

Below is a list of some of the best Eid getaways and hotels.

UAE – ATLANTIS THE PALM, DUBAI: Celebrate Eid in style at Atlantis, The Palm, an iconic resort on the Palm Jumeirah island. With its stunning architecture, expansive water park, and pristine beaches, Atlantis offers an unforgettable experience for guests of all ages.

QATAR – BANYAN TREE, DOHA: Immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of Doha while staying at the stunning Banyan Tree Hotel in Qatar. The hotel features 126 luxurious guest rooms including 66 suites, 215 serviced residences and an Altitude Club Lounge. The property offers guests the utmost comfort and serenity with striking views of the garden, Doha bay, and the city. The hotel is also a dining destination in the heart of Msheireb that includes the Panya-Lobby lounge, Il Galante-All day-dining, Saffron-signature Thai restaurant, Qalamkarri-Indian restaurant and Vertigo-Bar, which overlooks the panoramic view of Doha's skyline.

THE NETHERLANDS – ANANTARA GRAND HOTEL KRASNAPOLSKY, AMSTERDAM: As the Dutch capital bursts into a riot of colors with the arrival of the tulip season, the Anantara Grand Hotel is a unique Eid getaway for nature lovers. The hotel also provides a romantic 'Tulips in Bloom' experience, which includes a limousine transfer, a guided museum tour, and a luxury picnic served by an Anantara butler amid a sea of flowers in a private tulip field. The 'Tulips in Bloom' adventure is offered daily from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, from mid-March until mid-May.

MOROCCO – ROYAL MANSOUR MARRAKECH: Experience the magic of Marrakech at the Royal Mansour, an opulent hotel that embodies Moroccan luxury and hospitality. Nestled within the city's ancient walls, this lavish retreat offers private riads, lush gardens, and a world-renowned spa.



INDONESIA – AYANA RESORT AND SPA BALI: Treat yourself to a luxurious Eid getaway at AYANA Resort and Spa Bali, a breathtaking cliff-top resort overlooking Jimbaran Bay. With its stunning infinity pools, private beach, and award-winning spa, AYANA promises an unforgettable island escape.

GREECE – KATIKIES HOTEL, SANTORINI: Experience the romance and beauty of Santorini at Katikies Hotel, a boutique retreat perched on the island's famous caldera cliffs. Enjoy stunning sunsets, luxurious accommodations, and impeccable service at this idyllic Greek getaway.

UK – THE DORCHESTER, LONDON: Indulge in the timeless elegance of The Dorchester, a legendary hotel in the heart of London's Mayfair district. With its sumptuous rooms, Michelin-

starred dining, and world-class service, The Dorchester offers the perfect Eid escape in the British capital.

JAPAN – HOSHINOYA KYOTO: Immerse yourself in the tranquility of traditional Japan at Hoshinoya Kyoto, a luxurious ryokan nestled along the banks of the Oi River. Experience the art of Japanese hospitality with kaiseki dining, private hot spring baths, and serene garden views.

TANZANIA – BARAZA RESORT & SPA, ZANZIBAR: Discover the beauty of Zanzibar at Baraza Resort & Spa, an exquisite beachfront retreat inspired by the island's rich Swahili heritage. With its elegant villas, turquoise waters, and world-class amenities, Baraza offers the ultimate Eid getaway in East Africa.

USA – THE PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY: Experience the glamor and excitement of New York City at The Plaza Hotel, an iconic landmark situated on Fifth Avenue. With its luxurious accommodations, legendary afternoon tea, and unparalleled views of Central Park, The Plaza promises an unforgettable Eid celebration in the Big Apple.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity – The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, @hello_hermoine





Main electoral committees of the five electoral constituencies announced the 50 winners of the general elections held for the 18th legislative term of the National Assembly on 4 April. Ten candidates were chosen from each constituency through a single-non-transferable-voting process, which allowed each voter to select one candidate from their constituency.

Names and a brief biodata on the winning candidates are as follows:

1st Constituency



Osama Zaid Al-Zaid



Abdullah Jassim Al-Mudhaf



Mohammad Johar Hayat



Ahmad Haji Lari



Issa Ahmad Al-Kanderi



Basel Hussain Al-bahrani



Adel Jassem Al-Damkhi



Khaled Marzouq Al-Ameera



Saleh Ahmad Ashour



Mohammad Barrak Al-Azmi

Osama Zaid Al-Zaid: Worked in the petrochemical sector. Member of the 2023 Assembly and of the annulled 2022 Assembly.

Abdullah Jassem Al-Mudhaf: Born in 1983. Holds Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and worked in the banking and investment sectors. Member of the 2023 Assembly and the annulled 2022 Assembly.

Mohammad Johar Hayat: Born in 1982. Holds Bachelor's Degree in Political science and Philosophy. Journalist and writer on political and sports affairs and specialized in preparing and presenting programs on radio and television. He has been a member of various committees of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights since 2006, and a member of the Kuwait Journalists Association since 2007.

Ahmad Haji Lari: Born in 1955. Holds Bachelor's degree in Statistics. Member of the Municipal Council (1993 – 1995 –

1999). Member of the National Assembly (2006 – 2008 – 2013 – 2023, and the annulled 2022).

Basel Hussain Al-Bahrani: He holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in education. He worked in the Personal Protection Department at the Ministry of Interior and in Kuwaiti embassies outside the country, He currently works in the private sector. He has many contributions in the social and political field. Member of the General Secretariat of the Popular Action Movement.

Issa Ahmad Al-Kanderi: Born in 1963. Former minister. Diploma from the Commercial Institute, specializing in banking. Member of the National Assembly (2013 – 2016 – 2020 – 2023 and the annulled 2022).

Khaled Marzouq Al-Ameera: Holds a bachelor's degree in security sciences. Worked as an officer in the Ministry of Interior. Member of the 2023 Assembly and the 2022 annulled Assembly.

Adel Jassem Al-Damkhi: Born in 1965. PhD in Islamic Sharia. Member of the National Assembly (annulled 2012 – 2016 – 2023- annulled 2022).

Saleh Ahmad Ashour: Born in 1953. Holds Bachelor's Degree in Economics and two Diplomas, military sciences and communications. A former colonel in the Air Force, He worked in the Ministry of Transportation, then he won membership in the national Assembly's in 1999, 2003 and 2006, and a membership in various national associations, Including Kuwait Economics Society, Kuwait Graduates Association, Kuwait Human Rights Society, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait Journalists Association and Al-Thaqalayn Charitable Society.

Mohammad Barrak Al-Azmi: Holds a Master's degree in Islamic Studies in 2009. He became a preacher in 2005, and works at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs at Marawi Al-Hadya Mosque in Salwa area.

2nd Constituency



Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim



Shuaib Ali Shaaban



Abdulwahab Aref Al-Essa



Falah Dhahi Al-Hajri



Mohammad Barrak Al-Mutair



Bader Nashmi Al-Enzi



Nawaf Bhaish Al-Azmi



Abdullah Turki Al-Anbaei



Bader Hamed Al-Mulla



Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Masoud

Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim: Born in 1968. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. Member of the National Assembly (2006 – 2008 – 2009 – annulled 2012 – 2013 – 2016 – 2023). Held the position of Speaker of the National Assembly (2013 – 2016 – 2020). Former Chairman of Kuwait Sports Club – Member of the Society of Engineers and the International Association of Mechanical Engineers.

Shuaib Ali Shaaban: Born in 1984. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Police Sciences from Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences. An officer in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. Member of the National Assembly (2022 annulled) and in 2023.

Abdulwahab Aref Al-Essa: Born in 1988. Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Kuwait University. Worked in media and commerce. Member of the Kuwait Journalists Association.

Member of the National Assembly (2022 annulled) and 2023.

Falah Dhahi Al-Hajri: Director of the Attarjah Center for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an. Member of the National Assembly and (2022 annulled) and 2023.

Mohammad Barrak Al-Mutair: Born in 1969. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Member of the National Assembly (2003 – 2006 – 2008 – 2016 – 2020 – 2022 annulled) and 2023.

Bader Nashmi Al-Enezi: Born in 1979. Holds a Bachelor's degree in media from Kuwait University. An employee at the Public Authority for Communications. Chairman of the Board of Directors' Union (2009 – 2011). Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Nawaf Bhaish Al-Azmi: Born in 1978. Retired

Abdullah Turki Al-Anbaei: Born in 1983. Bachelor's degree from Kuwait University. Worked in the private sector. Member of the National Assembly (2022 annulled) and 2023.

Bader Hamed Al-Mulla: Born in 1971. Holds a Doctorate in law. A lawyer and member of the teaching staff at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences. Member of the National Assembly (2016 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Masoud: Born in 1961. Holds a Master's degree in computer engineering. is a computer engineer at Kuwait Airways. Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

3rd Constituency



Abdulkarim Abdullah Al-Kandari



Abdulaziz Tariq Al-Saqoubi



Mohalhal Khaled Al-Mudhaf



Fares Saad Al-Otaibi



Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Saadoun



Jarrah Khale Al-Fouzan



Muhannad Talal Al-Sayer



Ahmad Nabil Al-Fadhel



Jenan Mohsen Ramadan



Hamad Adel Al-Obeid

Abdulkarim Abdullah Al-Kandari: Born in 1981. PhD in business and commercial law. Works as a lawyer and professor at the Faculty of Law at Kuwait University. Member of the National Assembly (2013 – 2016 – 2020 and annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Abdulaziz Tariq Al-Saqoubi: Born in 1986. Bachelor of Architecture from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University 2008. Master of Architecture from University of Cincinnati. Member of the National Assembly (2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Mohalhal Khaled Al-Mudhaf: Born in 1971. Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. Member of the teaching staff at the Industrial Institute in the Public Authority for Applied Education. Member of the National Assembly (2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Fares Saad Al-Otaibi: Born in 1974. Bachelor's degree in Business

Administration. General Controller in Kuwait Municipality. Member of the National Assembly (2013 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023

Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Saadoun: Born in 1934. Former Speaker of the National Assembly. Member of the National Assembly (1975 – 1981 – 1985 – 1992 – 1996 – 1999 – 2003 – 2006 – 2008 – 2009 – annulled 2012 and 2022, as well as in 2023) He was also Assistant Undersecretary for Telegraph and Telephone Affairs at the Ministry of Communications. President of Kuwait Football Association from 1968 to 1976.

Jarrah Khale Al-Fouzan: Born in 1989. Bachelor's law degree. General Manager of Cyber Systems. Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Muhannad Talal Al-Sayer: Born in 1981. Master of Private Law. Member of the National Assembly (2020 – annulled

2022) and in 2023.

Ahmad Nabil Al-Fadhel: Born in 1977. Bachelor's degree in administration science. He held leadership positions in many listed and unlisted companies. Member of the Laws Proposals and Projects team of the campaign of former MP Nabil Al-Fadhel. Member of the National Assembly 2016.

Jenan Mohsen Ramadan: Born in 1973. Bachelor of Chemical Engineering from Kuwait University. Master of Chemical Engineering from Kuwait University. Member of the annulled 2022 National Assembly and in 2023.

Hamad Adel Al-Obeid: Born in 1982. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Comparative Jurisprudence and Fundamentals of Jurisprudence from Kuwait University. Holds a Master's degree in Islamic economics from Cairo University. Member of the annulled 2022 National Assembly and in 2023.

4th Constituency



Shuaib Al-Muwaizri



Anwar Arrak Al-Dhaferi



Obaid Mohammad Almutairi



Mohammad Awadh Al-Ruqaib



Mubarak Hmoud Al-Tasha



Bader Sayar Al-Shammari



Saad Ali Al-Rashidi



Fayez Ghanem Al-Jamhour



Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf



Mohammad Haif Al-Mutairi

Shuaib Shabab Al-Muwaizri: Born in 1959. Holds a diploma in police academy. A former colonel in the Ministry of Interior. Former Member of the National Assembly (2009 – annulled 2012 – 2016 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Anwar Arrak Al-Dhaferi: Born in 1984. Holds a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education. President of the General Union of Students and Trainees of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training between 2005 and 2006. General coordinator of the Kuwaiti Progressive Movement. He worked as a journalist in the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Rai.

Obaid Mohammad Al-Mutairi: Born in 1971, Doctorate in Law, Faculty Member in Law College at Kuwait University, former Member of Parliament in 2012-2020.

Mohammad Awadh Al-Ruqaib: Born in 1981. He holds a Bachelor's degree in accounting. Former executive in Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB). Former member of the Municipal Council. Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Mubarak Hmoud Al-Tasha: Holds PhD in private law compared to Islamic law. Legal advisor to the Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf. Teacher of personal status law at Kuwait University. Teacher of civil law at the Commercial Institute. Member of the annulled 2022 National Assembly and in 2023.

Bader Sayyar Al-Shammari: Born in 1973. Retired Major General from the Ministry of Interior. Formerly Director of Jahra Immigration. Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Saad Ali Al-Rashidi: Born in 1965. Holds a high school diploma.

Worked in the Ministry of Interior. Member of the National Assembly (2008 – 2009 – annulled 2012 – 2013 – 2016 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Fayez Ghanem Al-Jamhour: Born in 1971. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Sharia. Former executive at Ministry of Public Works. Former MP in the 2020 National Assembly and in 2023.

Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf: Born in 1970. Holds a Master's degree in law and a diploma in private law. Member of the National Assembly (2016 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Mohammad Hayef Al-Mutairi: Born in 1964. Holds a BA in Islamic Studies. Imam and preacher at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Member of the National Assembly (2008 – 2009 – 2012 – 2016 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.

5th Constituency



Fahad Falah Al-Azmi



Hamdan Salem Al-Azmi



Mutib Nasser Al-Sahali



Saud Abdulaziz Al-Hajri



Bader Zayed Al-Azmi



Majed Musaed Al-Mutairi



Abdulhadi Nasser Al-Ajmi



Hani Hussain Shams



Mohammad Musaed Al-Dawsari



Khaled Mohammad Al-Otaibi

Fahad Falah Al-Azmi: Ex-military and member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Hamdan Salem Al-Azmi: Born in 1968. Master's in Civil Law. Attorney and legal researcher at the Ministry of Interior. Member of the National Assembly (2013 – 2016 – 2020 and annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Mutib Nasser Al-Sahali: Born in 1974. Holds a Bachelor's Degree in Police sciences. He worked in the Ministry of Interior in several departments until he reached the rank of retired major general.

Saud Abdulaziz Al-Hajri: Master's in Mechanical Engineering from the United States. Worked in the field of media and

journalism. Member of the National Assembly (annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Bader Zayed Al-Dahoum: Born in 1975. He holds a doctorate and a master's degree in fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic education teacher. Member of the National Assembly 2012. Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jaber Al Ali Cooperative Society.

Majed Musaed Al-Mutairi: Born in 1972. Bachelor's of Business Administration. Worked for Kuwait Oil Company. Member of National Assembly (2016 and annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Abdulhadi Nasser Al-Ajmi: Born in 1974. Holds a PhD in Islamic

history. Professor of History and Civilization at the College of Arts at Kuwait University. Member of the 2023 National Assembly.

Hani Hussein Shams: Born in 1970. Bachelor's degree in Commerce, majoring in accounting from Kuwait University. Member of Parliament (annulled 2022) and in 2023.

Mohammad Musaed Al-Dawsari: Born in 1976. He holds a doctorate in public law from Ain Shams University in 2015. Working as an Attorney.

Khaled Mohammad Al-Otaibi: Born in 1966. Bachelor's degree in Police Sciences. Member of the National Assembly (2016 – 2020 – annulled 2022) and in 2023.



Diplomats on a visit to Naif Palace



United Nations Habitat office in Kuwait, in cooperation with the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan, H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov and in coordination with the Ministry of Information, organized a visit to the historic Naif Palace for ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions in the country.

The ambassadors learned about the history of this palace, which was built from mud and clay in 1919 during the reign of Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. It was adjacent to the third wall of Kuwait, part of which was constructed with cement and bricks in 1950. Then it served as a directorate of public security, and today it has become the Capital Governorate building. During Ramadan, the palace opens its doors to the public and presents the Iftar Cannon.

Ambassador Zubaydov expressed his happiness at visiting the palace, and stressed that the Naif Palace is considered one of the most beautiful historical and cultural monuments in Kuwait. Praising the choice of the palace to introduce his fellow ambassadors to the abundance of Kuwaiti heritage, the Tajik ambassador noted that the palace was added to the list of heritage sites in the Islamic world, for its political, security, cultural, heritage, archaeological and architectural aspects, which extend back to more than a century.

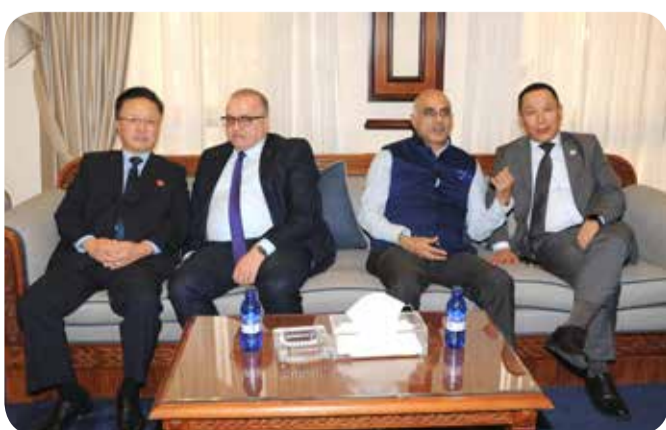
Ambassador Zubaydov, on behalf of the entire diplomatic missions and international



organizations accredited to the country, extended warmest congratulations to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait on the occasion of entering the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan.

For her part, the head of the UN-Habitat mission, Dr. Amira Al-Hassan, confirmed that the mission organizes this visit once in the month of Ramadan every year in cooperation with the Deanship of the Diplomatic Corps.

She thanked both the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Information for facilitating the diplomatic visit to the palace. She added that the visit aims to familiarize the ambassadors with the heritage dimension of Kuwait, the spiritual celebration of the holy month of Ramadan, Kuwaiti customs and traditions, through viewing the Naif Palace Museum and meeting families who come to watch the launch of the iftar cannon, prayer in the palace mosque, and the group breakfast. The ambassadors expressed their happiness with what they saw and wished to repeat the visit again.



Kuwait's perfume market set to soar to 100 million dinars by 2032

The country's perfume market is expected to surge due to a 7.7 percent annual growth rate from 2024 to 2032, exceeding previous projections of reaching 77 million dinars by 2028.



local plans encouraging perfume production, and the emergence of specialized perfume shops."

The report continued: "The Kuwaiti government's launch of policies supporting local perfume production also stimulates market growth. These initiatives encourage the local industry through various incentives and the promotion of a conducive business environment, fostering the development of local brands. This adds diversity to the market and enhances competitiveness among perfume brands in Kuwait."

Growth stimulation

The Emark report indicated that the increasing number of social media influencers and brand ambassadors for perfume brands is an important factor stimulating growth in perfume purchases in Kuwait. It expects that the rising adoption of perfume sales in retail stores and strategic partnerships between international and local brands will enhance market growth between 2024 and 2032.

The report also highlighted that the Kuwaiti perfume market depends primarily on consumers' growing preference for luxury and premium brands, driven by higher disposable incomes. Additionally, the increasing popularity of international brands is contributing to the market's growth.

The Emark report stated that the widespread adoption of perfumes in Kuwait as symbols of social status and emerging fashion trends is an important catalyst for the perfume market in Kuwait. The increasing consumer awareness towards personal care and the growing demand

for various personal perfumes will positively affect the Kuwaiti perfume market between 2024 and 2032. It also noted that perfumes are traditionally used in many social and religious celebrations in Kuwait, which will further support the market.

According to a recent report, the perfume market in Kuwait is projected to hit a market capitalization of around 100 million dinars by 2032. This growth will be fueled by an annual accumulated growth rate of 7.7% between 2024 and 2032. This figure surpasses earlier expectations, which estimated the market capitalization of Kuwait's perfume industry to reach about 77 million dinars by 2028.

The report issued by Emark Research Company, which covers the trends, size, growth, and forecasts of the perfume market in Kuwait between 2024 and 2032, stated, "The value of the perfume market in Kuwait reached 50.3 million dinars in 2023, compared to 46.3 million dinars in 2022."

The report further added that "the most prominent key factors driving the growth of the perfume market in Kuwait are the increasing spending on personal care goods, driven by higher disposable income, the implementation of

New Indian Consular Application Centre opens in Jahra, Kuwait

- The new facility, inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, will be managed by the embassy's outsourcing partner, BLS International.



On Monday, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, officially inaugurated a new Indian Consular Application Centre (ICAC) located in Jahra, Kuwait.

The new center will also be managed by the embassy's outsourcing partner, BLS International. The Jahra ICAC will be the fourth such ICAC in Kuwait, with the other three located in Kuwait City, Fahaheel, and Jleeb.

The Consular, passport, and visa services will be available at building No. 27, Al Khalifa building, second floor, offices 3 & 14, block No. 93, Jahra, Kuwait. The centre will operate from Saturday to Thursday from 9 AM to 2 PM.

The Jahra ICAC represents another step towards facilitating Indian visas for Kuwaitis

and providing various consular services for Indian nationals, including Amnesty-related travel documents, residing in Jahra and its neighboring areas up to Abdali.

The new facility is expected to streamline the application process, reduce waiting times, and ensure a seamless experience for all applicants. It is part of the Government of India's steadfast commitment to making public services more accessible, hassle-free, and technology-driven.

It's worth noting that the number of Kuwaiti visitors to India has been increasing over the years. The embassy typically issues multiple-entry Indian tourist visas within a day to Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. In 2023, the embassy issued approximately 10,000 visas.



Kalaam Group's subsidiaries unite in festive Ghabga event

The prominent digital solutions company in the region continues to prioritize fostering a collaborative spirit among its employees.

KEMS Zajil Telecom and Kalaam Carrier Solutions, both subsidiaries of Kalaam Group, a prominent digital solutions company in the region, held their annual employee Ghabga event at the Palms Beach Hotel. This much-anticipated gathering fostered a warm and welcoming atmosphere, bringing together the Kalaam family.

Attendees enjoyed a variety of recreational activities and engaging competitions, which further enhanced the sense of community and togetherness. From friendly games to lively conversations, the event embodied the



spirit of unity that defines Kalaam Kuwait. The company continues to prioritize fostering a collaborative spirit among its employees.



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Rail link project study to complete in three months

A feasibility study on the technical and economic aspects of the Kuwait – Saudi Arabia Railway project, commissioned by the Ministry of Public Works is expected to be completed within the coming three months.

Media reports citing ministry sources noted that the first phase of the project will involve determining the best railway route that will start from Al-Shadadiya area in Kuwait and extend to the city of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. A second phase

will include the design of the railway link project between the two countries, and the third phase will be the actual implementation and construction of the project.

While the necessary procedures and approvals for the first phase are currently being finalized, the second phase is expected to take about a year, and the final construction and implementation phase is projected to take approximately three years.

Based on these projections, the long-awaited Kuwait – Saudi Railway link is likely to be flagged off some time in 2028. The project aims to achieve safe and efficient railway transportation between the two countries, and reduce the time taken to travel the 650 km distance to under two hours. The project is also expected to boost trade and tourism, and in general spur economic growth, while ensuring the safe and secure transport of people and goods between the two countries.



The consulting fees for conducting the financial, economic, and technical feasibility study for the railway connection project will be split equally between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in line with the project stages and services provided. These fees will only be collected after both parties approve the outputs for each stage.

New legislative term, an opportunity for a fresh start

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to incite sentiments and emotions among voters at the expense of the nation and all its citizens."

Expressing his hope that every eligible citizen would participate in the election, His Highness the Amir added, "Those who boycott it will be relinquishing their constitutional right, and will not be performing their national duty to select a right candidate. They will have no right later to blame anyone for the poor outcome of elections, or the poor performance and achievement of the National Assembly."

His Highness also emphasized the need to maintain national identity and asserted that severe damage was done to the national identity through tampering with Kuwait's nationality. He added, "Because the national identity represents existence, an issue of rule, and a destiny of a nation, so an assault on it is an assault on the structure of the state and its major components, and cannot be ignored, therefore we support all efforts and measures aimed at preserving the national identity."

Official election results out on Friday showed that participation among the 834,733 registered voters in the country was around 62 percent. Although the number of candidates vying for the 50 seats in the National Assembly was on the lower side at 200, the level of enthusiasm and support in constituencies for various candidates was quite discernable.

Giving his analysis on the election results, Assistant Professor of History at Kuwait University, Bader al-Saif said, "No radical change was expected in the results, and with just seven of the 11 new MPs elected being truly new faces to parliament, the change ratio at just 14 percent was the lowest. He added that the electorate seem to be voting for many of the same MPs, just rotating some of them in each election.

The snap general elections for the 18th legislative term of parliament provide an opportunity for a reset in relations between the executive and legislative wings in the National Assembly. Too often in the past, contention and confrontation between the two parliamentary entities have hampered the cooperation and coordination needed to move the country forward. A fresh restart is direly needed.

The pace of political happenings over the past several months have been dizzying. On 20 December, 2023 His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was formally sworn in before a special session of Parliament, as the seventh Amir of Kuwait. In an incisive speech to lawmakers on the occasion, His Highness urged parliament and the executive to work together to benefit the nation and its people.

On 17 January, a new government headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, was sworn in with a promise to carry out reforms and move the country forward on a path of progress and development. Kuwait has embarked on a new era, and a fresh phase in national action that would require a new thinking and a modern approach, said the premier.

In his first cabinet meeting, the prime minister outlined the policies and priorities that would guide the government going forward, and urged his cabinet colleagues to focus on developing public services and infrastructure,

reviewing laws to enhance legislative reforms, as well as giving momentum to construction and development in the country.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah affirmed that one of the government's priorities, during the next stage, would be to present a vision about the future of economy and investment in Kuwait with a view to maximizing value added to the national economy. He added that developing the northern region to be an international hub for providing innovative solutions and services would be a priority.

However, less than a month after the new cabinet was sworn in, His Highness the Amir issued a decree on 15 February dissolving parliament following a standoff in the National Assembly between the executive and legislative sections. The impasse arose after one lawmaker used 'unconstitutional language', which the cabinet insisted should be deleted from the parliamentary dossier.

The content and tone of the Amiri speech on Monday could set the stage for relations between the executive and legislative wings during the 18th legislative term of parliament. With a host of issues that have eluded resolution or been addressed inadequately in the past, the country cannot afford yet another round of political standoffs that disrupt the legislative term.

There are several challenges that need to be effectively resolved and addressed by the government, beginning with designing effective and coherent policies and programs to diversify the economy. Additionally, to make a clean break from the past the new government will need a fresh narrative, one that is not loaded with bureaucratic and political baggage that dragged down previous plans and policies.

The authorities will also need to take on a mission-oriented approach in implementing clearly defined plans to revive and revitalize critical stalled projects in utilities and infrastructure development, improve the quality of education and training so as to equip young nationals to find gainful employment opportunities in the private sector, or spur entrepreneurship.

At the core of challenges facing the country has been the inability to implement effective administrative, financial and economic reforms needed to drive the economy and progress. Finding common ground between the government and parliament is key to implementing these reforms and to invigorating the economic diversification program, as well as driving the country's Vision 2035 plan forward.

A collaborative parliamentary environment is also critical to design policies and plans that align public sector needs with private sector interests, and encourage greater private participation in the economy. A result-oriented public-private investment strategy could lead to creation of innovative new jobs, encourage entrepreneurship, empower youth by developing and upskilling their latent capabilities, and ensure all-around productivity gains that benefit the nation.

However, implementing the needed reforms, plans and policies will require the new government and parliament to put aside past differences and find the space to collaborate and coordinate their efforts in a way that prioritizes the interests of the nation and the wellbeing of its people.



AmCham Kuwait hosts annual Ramadan Iftar

The ABCK-AmCham Kuwait held their Annual Ramadan Iftar at the Four Seasons Hotel, sponsored by the Kuwait Resources House (KRH) as the Platinum Sponsor, Saudi Arabian Chevron as the Gold Sponsor, Brinks Kuwait as Silver Sponsor, Raytheon Technologies as a supporting sponsor, and British Airways as the event's Exclusive Airline Partner.

Dr. Arezou Harraf, Vice Chair for AmCham Kuwait, commenced the evening by extending warm greetings and expressing gratitude to all attendees. Her Excellency, U.S. Ambassador Karen H. Sasahara, graced the occasion with her presence, emphasizing the importance of cultural exchange and collaboration.

In a touching tribute, Dr. Arezou recognized Mr. Omar Ben Naji for his outstanding contributions to the organization, particularly his instrumental role in the Disabilities Focus Group. Mr. Ben Naji's efforts have facilitated meaningful connections between corporate entities and non-profit organizations, fostering inclusivity and support for individuals with disabilities. The event featured esteemed guests from various embassies and organizations, including representatives from KACCH/BACCH, the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, and the Kuwait Society for the Follow-Up Issues of Disabled People. Their dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities was commendably acknowledged.

Dr. Arezou expressed profound appreciation to the sponsors whose generous support made the event possible, highlighting the essential role of corporate collaboration in fostering societal inclusivity and empowerment.

The evening also included inspiring remarks from Dr. Tala Al Dabbous of KACCH/BACCH, Ms. Hanaa Al Baghdady of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, and Dr. Khlood Al Ali of the Kuwait Society for the Follow-Up Issues of

Disabled People, all of whom shared insights into their impactful work and initiatives.

The AmCham Kuwait team held a raffle for participants to finalize the evening. The Raffle prizes include vouchers from IFA International Travel & Tourism, presenting lucky recipients with a discount of 20 KD each. DHL contributed to the excitement with 10 vouchers, providing a generous 60% discount on shipping charges. Sultan added to the anticipation with three vouchers worth 30 KD each, while the Al Shayaa group generously provided 12 vouchers for esteemed restaurants including Babel, Cheesecake Factory, P.F. Chang's, Asha's, and Amiti Noura restaurants.

Hyatt Regency Al Kout contributed two vouchers to the mix, offering lucky winners opportunities for luxurious stays and dining experiences. Tariq al Ghanim added to the excitement with two vouchers worth 50 KD each, redeemable for future catering services. Union Trading Co. further enriched the raffle with three Air Fryers up for grabs.

UBS enhanced the prize with four vouchers, promising lucky winners unique opportunities.

However, the highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the grand prize courtesy of British Airways – one fortunate attendee secured a journey to New York with a ticket in World Traveller Plus, marking a truly memorable conclusion to the event.

The raffle added an extra layer of excitement and engagement to the evening, providing participants with the opportunity to walk away with valuable prizes and unforgettable experiences.

The annual Iftar event is just one of the many activities organized by AMCHAM Kuwait throughout the year. The organization is dedicated to promoting bilateral trade and investment between the United States and Kuwait and supporting the interests of American companies operating in the country.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Democracies Can Win the Tech Race



Ylli Bajraktari and André Loeseckrug-Pietri

Ylli Bajraktari, a former chief of staff to the US National Security Adviser and a former executive director of the US National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, is CEO of the Special Competitive Studies Project.

André Loeseckrug-Pietri is Chairman and Scientific Director of the Joint European Disruptive Initiative, the European advanced research projects agency.



The world is on the precipice of a technological cold war. As authoritarian regimes develop new digital tools that endanger open societies and threaten democratic values, the West must decide whether to compete or concede. Today, the battle for freedom is being fought in Ukraine; but the frontline could one day be in Taiwan, a global technology hub, producing the world's most advanced microchips, and a flourishing democracy less than 100 miles off the coast of China, which seems bent on annexing the island.

Winning the race for future technologies demands a united front. Just as the West came together to deter Soviet expansionism and stop the spread of communism in the postwar period, the United States and the European Union must revitalize the transatlantic alliance to win the competition for global tech leadership. That means developing a new joint strategy, pooling resources and capabilities, streamlining regulations, and leveraging their strengths — such as advanced tools for semiconductors and lasers, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and genomics in Europe, and fusion

networks, clean energy, and the manufacturing technologies of tomorrow. To that end, the US CHIPS Act and the European Chips Act offer a blueprint, or at least the beginnings of one, for bolstering competitiveness in the next big technologies.

Cooperation on technology is not new. From the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva, from the OECD to the European AI Act, the race to artificial intelligence seems sometimes to be a policymaking race, to control and coordinate it — and rightly so, in some cases. For example, the main risks identified by the interim report of the UN's AI Advisory Body include risks to the stability of financial systems and to critical infrastructure, as well as strains on the environment, climate, and natural resources.

These issues are too important to be overlooked. In a recent report, the French AI Commission called for the creation of a World AI Organization to "evaluate and oversee AI systems." This could be a good idea, but it is not the only way to move forward. After all, the existence of the WHO is fundamental, but while it has played a vital role in the eradication of some diseases, it did not prevent the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, regulation should be a means to an end, not an end in itself. Despite the so-called Brussels effect, the EU's alleged ability to set global standards, the bloc's landmark regulations on electric vehicles or the General Data Protection Regulation have hardly made the EU a superpower in electric mobility or in data privacy. That is why transatlantic cooperation should be broadened to include research and development programs and large 'moonshot' projects.

Just as sanctions alone have not curbed Russia's aggression against Ukraine, regulation will not be enough to prevent bad actors from misusing AI. Similarly, the West will have to go on the offensive against China's techno-authoritarian model. Sharing intelligence can identify supply-chain vulnerabilities and facilitate 'friend-shoring'. In addition to developing technological ecosystems with like-minded partners, it will be crucial for US and EU policymakers to expose short-sighted private ventures that play into the hands of those who see technology as a tool of oppression, not liberation.

Moreover, the US and the EU cannot expect to win the technology race, which is also a war of ideas, when their citizens have been herded into social-media echo chambers, and when 44 percent of children globally use TikTok. On this cognitive battlefield, the West must lead the charge to develop technologies that encourage critical thinking and protect privacy, and to stop the destabilizing fragmentation of the digital sphere and the spread of online hate and disinformation. A revitalized

transatlantic alliance must ensure that emerging technologies reflect democratic principles and boost strategic autonomy. Forging partnerships with like-minded countries, including Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea, and enhancing cooperation among the G7 and the OECD could support these efforts. Together, they could develop an alternative model of technological empowerment, free of digital repression and authoritarianism, for developed and developing countries alike.

Western leaders should take inspiration from the COVID-19 vaccines, which, building on collaboration, massive experimentation, and decades of fundamental science, were developed in a record eight months. We must keep this spirit alive. Democracies risk being outmaneuvered in the technologies that will shape the future, with dire economic and security consequences. A robust transatlantic tech partnership is an imperative. The destiny of free and open societies depends on it.

“ Both the US and the EU must focus their efforts on achieving new breakthroughs in vital sectors, including AI, biotech, advanced networks, clean energy, and the manufacturing technologies of tomorrow. ”

energy, commercial space operations, and synthetic biology in the US.

It will also be necessary to build resilient supply chains. With China dominating the supply of metals and rare-earth elements necessary for batteries, semiconductors, and other technologies, the US and the EU are sleepwalking into a critical-minerals crisis. For example, China's market share of high-powered permanent magnets for offshore wind turbines is nearly 90 percent.

Lastly, both the US and the EU must focus their efforts on achieving new breakthroughs in vital sectors, including AI, biotech, advanced

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Solar Geoengineering Is a Dangerous Distraction



Yacob Mulugetta, Dean Bhekumuzi Bhebhe, and Niclas Hällström

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At the most recent United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), held in Nairobi, African countries took a strong stand against potential new technologies that, if developed, could tip an already disrupted climate into chaos.

The continent's leaders, with the support of other developing countries, helped shoot down a resolution that called for more research into the benefits and risks of solar radiation modification (SRM). Also known as solar geoengineering, SRM is the controversial idea that deliberately modifying the atmosphere to reflect some of the sun's rays back into space could help cool a warming planet. Instead, these policymakers supported the International Non-Use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering and emphasized the need for effective and equitable climate solutions.

Geoengineering encompasses a range of speculative technologies, of which SRM is just one, intended to address the effects, not the root causes, of climate change. Many

solar-geoengineering techniques have been proposed, but the most contemplated is stratospheric aerosol injection, which envisages fleets of high-flying airplanes continuously spraying large amounts of sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere to mimic the temporary cooling effects of volcanic eruptions.

In reality, such measures would likely destabilize an already severely disrupted climate. Consider that volcanic eruptions have historically precipitated extreme weather events and famines.

Moreover, climate models have long indicated that stratospheric aerosol injection could alter Indian monsoons and cause more frequent and persistent droughts in the volatile Sahel region. According to the UN Human Rights Council, solar geoengineering could "seriously interfere with the enjoyment of human rights for millions and perhaps billions of people."

Furthermore, disagreements over the use of SRM could exacerbate geopolitical conflicts and even trigger wars. And, given that geoengineering technologies are largely promoted by US-based interests and institutions funded by tech billionaires, African countries have good reason to fear that they would have little to no say in decisions about their deployment.

In addition to concerns about security and equity, geoengineering raises serious ethical questions. SRM and other related technologies appeal to those who repudiate the need for rapid, transformative societal change to limit global warming. Even entertaining this fantasy could become a dangerous distraction, especially as it gains traction as a tactic of delay for the fossil-fuel industry.

That is why African countries, together with Mexico, Colombia, Fiji, and Vanuatu,

Non-Use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering, an initiative that has been endorsed by more than 500 scholars and backed by almost 2,000 civil-society groups.

The agreement concludes that because solar geoengineering poses unacceptable risks and is inherently ungovernable, countries must reject outdoor experimentation, patents, public funding, or deployment of the technology.

The international community should adopt a strict ban on solar geoengineering, as it has done for human cloning and chemical weapons, and it must do so before the technology is commercialized. In fact, governments agreed to a de facto moratorium on geoengineering under the Convention on Biological Diversity more than a decade ago. The Non-Use Agreement would further reinforce this prohibition.

But it is not enough to resist dangerous distractions like SRM. Addressing the climate crisis requires a razor-sharp focus on real solutions and South-South cooperation. Two of us, as part of the Independent Expert Group on Just Transition and Development, recently outlined how African countries can pursue an effective climate and development agenda — and how efforts such as the Least Developed Countries Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative could support this. Likewise, the proposed Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, a binding plan to phase out oil, gas, and coal rapidly and equitably, is gaining momentum. We anticipate and welcome a wave of countries joining Colombia, Fiji, and Vanuatu in simultaneously championing the International Non-Use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering and the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Susana Muhamad, Colombia's environment minister, put it succinctly in her powerful closing plenary statement at the UNEA: "Pollution is not the solution for pollution." African leaders have warned that the world must not be hoodwinked and find itself on a slippery slope toward catastrophic geoengineering. It is time for the international community to listen.

“Concerns on security and equity aside, geoengineering raises serious ethical questions. SRM and related technologies appeal to those who repudiate the need for rapid, transformative societal change to limit global warming.”

Some SRM proponents argue that if spraying sulfate aerosols into the stratosphere does not achieve the desired result, it is always possible to stop. But that could prove dangerous: the masking effect of the injected particles would disappear, causing a rapid rise in temperatures. This so-called termination shock would be a nightmare scenario.

Africans see how their continent is being used as a testing ground for these dangerous technologies. Africa is the continent most vulnerable to climate change, the argument goes, and thus would benefit the most from geoengineering. In fact, Africans have the most to lose from failed geoengineering

pushed back forcefully against Switzerland's solar-geoengineering resolution at the UNEA, arguing that research has already demonstrated the catastrophic risks. They advocated for the UNEA to reaffirm a precautionary approach to these speculative technologies and to acknowledge the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment's call for a non-use agreement — a pioneering decision taken in August 2023. But the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Japan opposed this. Given the lack of consensus, Switzerland was forced to withdraw its resolution.

The negotiations underscored the importance of the call for the International



Cholesterol, the good, the bad, and the risks

Cholesterol is a waxy fat-like molecule (lipid) produced in the liver and found in cells and tissues throughout the body, as well as in the bloodstream. Cholesterol is only one of several types of lipids found in the body, but it is the one most commonly known; another well known lipid is triglyceride. Cholesterol is actually part lipid and part protein, and is often referred to as lipoprotein.

In addition to being produced by the liver, some cholesterol is also introduced into the body through diet, mainly from animal-based foods, such as red meat, full-fat dairy, egg yolks, and others. The body needs cholesterol to stay healthy and perform various functions; they are vital for the formation of cell membranes, certain hormones, and vitamin D, as well as for enzymes that help digest food, and for healthy cell function.

Since cholesterol is insoluble in water it cannot move on its own in the blood. To facilitate the transport of cholesterol, the liver produces other lipoproteins which carry the cholesterol through the bloodstream. The two major forms of lipoprotein that transport cholesterol are low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL).

Cholesterol carried by low-density lipoproteins in the blood to the cells is known as LDL cholesterol, often referred to as the 'bad cholesterol'. On the other hand, cholesterol absorbed by high-density lipoproteins from blood is known as HDL cholesterol, or the good cholesterol. The HDL cholesterol transports cholesterol from blood back to the liver where it is excreted from the body. Healthy levels of HDL cholesterol, can help lower your risk of blood clots, heart disease, and stroke.

While a certain level of cholesterol is needed by the body, high levels of cholesterol and other lipids lead to hyperlipidemia, which raises the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Too much LDL in the blood can lead to it collecting on the artery walls where it contributes, along with other fats, calcium, and other substances, to the buildup of plaque (athero) in the arteries.

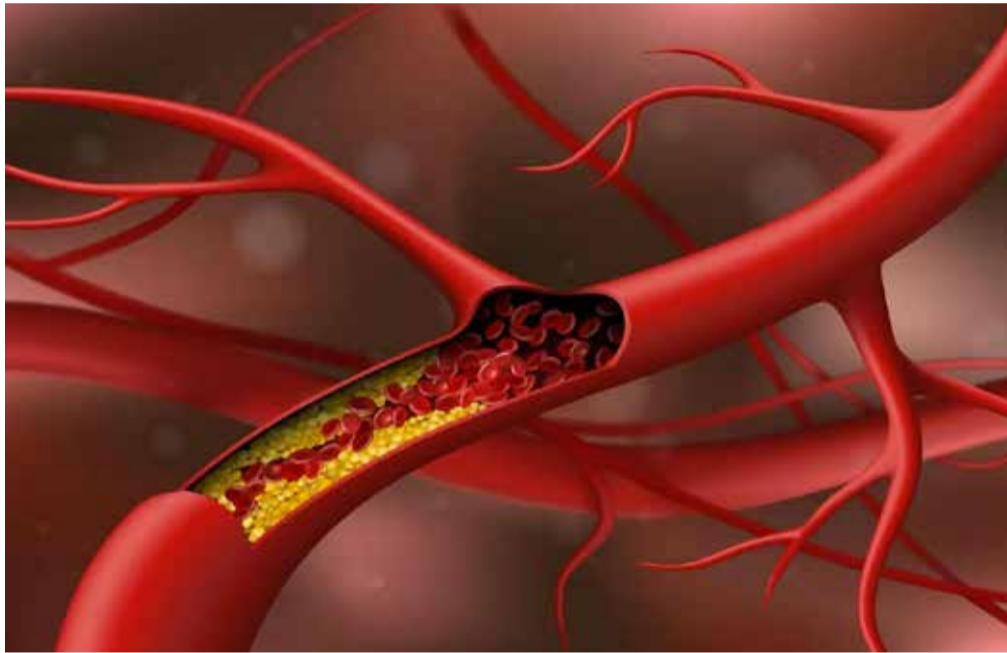
The plaque buildup gradually leads to the narrowing and hardening (sclerosis) of the arteries resulting in atherosclerosis, which reduces the flow of blood to organs and tissues throughout the body. Narrowing of arteries and increase in pressure of blood could cause portions of the plaque to break off in the form of blood clots that could end up blocking blood flow to an organ. If the blockage is in an artery leading to the heart or brain it could lead to a heart attack or stroke.

High cholesterol typically does not cause any symptoms, and many people do not even realize they have high cholesterol until they develop serious complications, such as a heart attack or stroke. The only way to find out if your cholesterol is high is through a blood test that measures cholesterol in milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dl), or in some cases millimoles per liter (mmol/l).

The blood test results usually show total blood cholesterol, as well as details on HDL, LDL, and 20 percent of your total triglycerides, which is another type of lipid found in the blood that stores unused calories and provides energy to the body when needed. While the blood test results could vary based on individual's age, gender, health history or other factors, in general for adults who are otherwise healthy it is recommended that total cholesterol level be:

HDL. The higher this number, the better. It should be at least higher than 55 mg/dL for females and 45 mg/dL for males.

LDL. The lower this number, the better. In healthy adults it should be no more than 100 mg/dl. If you suffer from heart disease, blood vessel disease, or diabetes, it should be no more than 130 mg/dl.



Triglycerides number should be below 150 mg/dl. If your triglycerides are high and your LDL is also high or your HDL is low, you are at risk of developing atherosclerosis.

For adults aged 20 and over, borderline high total cholesterol levels are 200–239 mg/dl; borderline high LDL levels are 130–159 mg/dl; and borderline high triglycerides are 159–199 mg/dl. Some test results are marked in millimoles per liter (mmol/l). To convert from mmol/l to mg/dl, multiply by 0.056. To convert from mg/dl to mmol/l divide the mg/dl value by 18.02.

There are several reasons for high blood

cholesterol levels, including eating too many foods that are high in cholesterol, saturated fats, and trans fats. Living with obesity can also increase your risk of high cholesterol, as can other lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity and smoking.

The genes you are born with can also affect your chances of developing high cholesterol. Genes are passed down from parents to children and instruct your body to carry on its processes.

Some genes instruct your body on how to process cholesterol and fats, if your parents have high cholesterol, you may inherit their

genes and be at a greater risk of this condition.

In rare cases, high cholesterol is caused by familial hypercholesterolemia, a genetic disorder that prevents your body from removing LDL. According to the US-based National Human Genome Research Institute, most adults with this condition have total cholesterol levels above 300 mg/dl and LDL levels above 200 mg/dl. Other health conditions, such as diabetes and hypothyroidism, may also increase your risk of developing high cholesterol and related complications.

Nutritionists point out that foods high in cholesterol, saturated fats, or trans fats include red meat, organ meats, egg yolks, and high fat dairy products. Processed foods made with cocoa butter or palm oil, and deep-fried foods, such as potato chips, onion rings, and fried chicken, as well as certain baked goods, such as some cookies and muffins are high in saturated and trans fats

Eating fish and other foods that contain omega-3 fatty acids may help lower your LDL levels. For example, salmon, mackerel, and herring are rich sources of omega-3s. Walnuts, almonds, ground flaxseeds, and avocados also contain omega-3s that are helpful in lowering LDL levels.

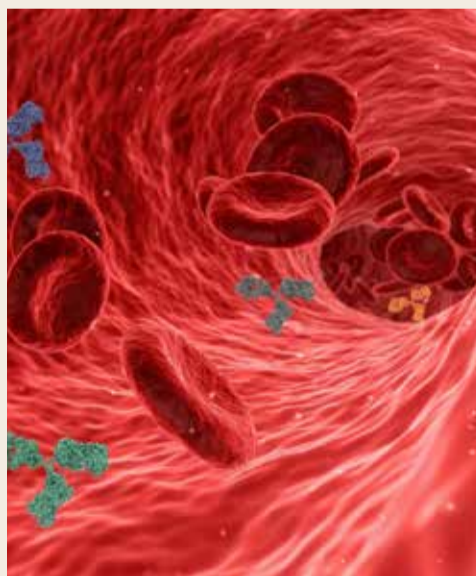
Remember that high cholesterol is a controllable risk factor for coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke. You can help keep it at an acceptable level by the three 'C method'. Check your blood cholesterol level regularly, change your diet or lifestyle if your test results are high, and consult a healthcare professional if you need help to control cholesterol.

Microplastics linked to increased risk of heart attack, stroke

Microscopic bits of plastic particles referred to as microplastics (smaller than five millimeters) and nanoplastics (less than a 1,000 nanometers in size) have been found everywhere, from ocean depths to mountain tops, and in everything, from the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and even in breast milk.

Despite the near ubiquitous presence of microplastics and growing awareness of their deleterious impact on the environment, not much is known about their direct effect on the health and wellbeing of people.

In a landmark new study published recently, researchers at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli in Italy have identified microplastics in human arterial plaque and linked them to adverse cardiovascular outcomes. The study is significant in being



the first to not only identify nanoplastics in arterial plaques, but also the first to show that patients with nanoplastic infested plaques had a greater incidence of cardiovascular events such as heart attacks, strokes, or death than patients who did not have such plaques.

For their study, the researchers looked at samples of arterial plaque of more than

250 patients who had undergone a plaque removal surgery. They found the presence of polyethylene (PE) microplastics in nearly 60 percent of patients, while polyvinyl chloride (PVC) microplastics were discovered in about 12 percent of patients. PE and PVC are two of the most commonly manufactured forms of plastic and are used in everything from bottles to building materials.

The study, which followed the patients over an average of 34 months following their surgery found that patients with microplastics in their arterial plaque were 4.5 times more likely to experience a severe cardiovascular health outcome, including heart attack, stroke, or death, compared to individuals whose arteries did not contain these plastic particles

Although the study establishes only correlation not causation — it shows the presence of microplastics in plaque but does not prove that the health outcomes are due these particles — it is nevertheless quite significant. While there is clearly much more work to do before the health effects of microplastics can be proven to affect heart health, the study does establish a strong downstream cardiovascular risk for patients with microplastics in their plaque.

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