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Olympics 2024, paving a path to peace, solidarity

Over the years, the three Olympic ideals have evolved and today they express a more contemporary version — to strive for excellence, to respect others and their diversity, and to celebrate friendships. These ideals form the corner-stones on which the Olympic Games aim to build a better, brighter and more peaceful world for all of us.

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

The 2024 Summer Olympics, officially the XXXIII Olympiad and branded as Paris 2024, got off to a spectacular start on Friday, 26 July. The traditional stadium-based Parade of Nations at Olympic opening ceremonies, was swapped at Paris 2024 for a lively parade of athletes on a flotilla of boats and barges. The parade took the athletes down a 6 km stretch along the River Seine in Paris, as more than 300,000 spectators on the river-bank cheered and waved to the athletes

Despite the rain playing spoil-sport, the parade was made even more riveting with French and international artists providing



dazzling performances from bridges, barges, riverbanks and rooftops along the parade route. The nearly four-hour ceremony to mark the opening of Olympics 2024 culminated in the Olympic torch lighting a hot-air balloon shaped cauldron that appeared to float 30-meters high into the Paris sky.

If the opening ceremony is any sign of what is in store during the next two weeks, the 33rd Olympiad will be remembered as one of the most exciting and eye-catching Games in modern Olympic history. Against a backdrop of iconic Parisian architectural marvels and historical venues, over 10,500 athletes from 206 national Olympic teams are set to compete in 32 sports and 329 events that range

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India-Kuwait strengthen bilateral ties at 6th Foreign Office Consultations

The 6th round of India-Kuwait Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held on 24 July in Kuwait. The Indian delegation was led by, Joint Secretary (Gulf), Ministry of External Affairs of India, Aseem R. Mahajan, while Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs of Kuwait (AFM), Ambassador Sameeh Essa Johar Hayat, headed the Kuwaiti delegation.

During the FOC, both sides undertook a comprehensive review of bilateral relationships and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. Expressing satisfaction with the traditionally strong bilateral ties, both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in various areas, including political ties, regular high-level exchanges, trade and investment, education, technology, health, culture and people to people contacts.

Following the meeting, the Indian Joint Secretary met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and discussed avenues and new initiatives to deepen the India-



Kuwait partnership. Earlier on 23 July, he also met with the Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce, Ziyad Al-Najem, and discussed avenues to further strengthen bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two friendly countries, including further boosting bilateral trade, diversifying the trade basket,



deepening energy cooperation and new initiatives in technology and Fintech.

In addition, during his meeting with the Assistant Foreign Minister (Legal), MOFA, Tahani Rashid Al-Naseer, Mr. Mahajan discussed matters related to the early finalization of ongoing negotiations of various agreements and MoUs.

The timely convening of the FOC in continuation of the previous FOC in May, 2023 is expected to impart further momentum in bilateral relations. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the consultations. It was agreed to hold the next FoC in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date.

Work on Kuwait-Saudi rail link to begin in 2026

The Kuwait-Saudi railway project moved a step closer to realization with the government's Higher Committee, formed to oversee the project, giving its approval to the findings of a feasibility study commissioned to examine all aspects of the rail-line project.



The study explored the various facets of the project, including its technical, financial, economic and social impacts, as well as the viability of the service to enhance passenger and freight movement between the two countries. With the feasibility study receiving approval, the project is now slated to move into the initial design phase this year before actual work on the project begins in 2026.

Extensive collaboration and commitment to the project in both countries has resulted in several reciprocal visits, meetings and site inspection tours by concerned entities in

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. These efforts have been instrumental in identifying potential obstacles and developing strategies to overcome them, so as to realize the project within a projected four-year time span..

The proposed high-speed train service will cover the approximately 600-kilometer rail line distance between the two countries in just one hour and forty minutes, significantly cutting the time required at present to travel the 640 km road distance between the two places. The service will operate six round trips daily, with a capacity to accommodate 3,300 passengers. With affordability being a key issue, ticket and freight charges are expected to be reasonably-priced.

The shared desire on both sides to accelerate the rail projects stems from its potential to enhance integration between the two countries in all fields and to boost trade, stimulate economic growth and strengthen bilateral relations, as well as serve as a catalyst for sustainable development.

The Cabinet has reportedly issued directives to the Ministry of Public Works and other relevant authorities to expedite the project and provide regular progress reports. The project is seen as part of the broader initiative to strengthen economic ties and build upon the deep historical relationship between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.



Kuwait committed to preventing human trafficking

Kuwait's commitment to preventing human trafficking and protecting migrant rights were reaffirmed by the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), which is the primary entity mandated to oversee all labor-related matters in Kuwait.

In a statement last week, PAM underlined Kuwait's firm commitment to safeguarding the dignity and rights of migrant workers, a crucial component of which is the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of migrant rights.

PAM plays a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being of migrant workers, including by operating a dedicated shelter that provides essential support and safety to migrant workers in need. Furthermore, PAM actively enforces the country's stringent anti-human trafficking laws, working tirelessly to protect the rights of migrant laborers.

PAM spokesperson and Chairperson of the Permanent Coordination Committee, Aseel Al-Moayed, emphasized the complex nature of human trafficking and the necessity of a united front to combat it effectively. She stressed the importance of collaboration among government entities, civil society organizations, and international bodies to address this pressing issue.

Al-Moayed commended Kuwait for its resolute stance against human trafficking and its proactive implementation of Law No. 91 of 2013, which specifically addresses human trafficking and migrant smuggling. She also expressed PAM's support for the National Committee tasked with implementing the National Strategy for Preventing Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants.

Considering the importance of public awareness in preventing human trafficking, the Authority, in collaboration with the Labor Union, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking, is organizing an awareness-raising event to coincide with the World Day Against Human Trafficking.

The event, which is scheduled to take place at the Avenues Mall on 30 July from 10am to 10pm, will aim to educate a broad segment of the community about this critical issue. Highlighting the importance of collective action and international cooperation in eradicating human trafficking and migrant smuggling, Al-Moayed extended an open invitation to the public to participate actively in the upcoming awareness-raising event.

PACI clarifies rules regarding fictitious addresses

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has provided clarification on the rules on fictitious addresses, and the steps that building owners must take in order to delete the names of people not living at their property from the PACI records. The Authority also made clear the measures that those having fictitious addresses on their civil ID must take in order to avoid fines and potential legal action.

Deputy Director General for Registration Affairs at PACI, Jaber Al-Kandari, explained that property owners must provide their fingerprint when requesting to delete individuals who do not reside in their buildings and to confirm that the registration in PACI records is invalid. Property owners must also present proof of ownership or a house document when visiting the authority to initiate deletion of a person's name from their property.

He added that after the addresses are removed from PACI records, the fictitious resident will be informed through 'My Identity' and 'Sahel' applications, and the details published in the official Kuwaiti gazette. The concerned person will then

have a 30-day period to visit the PACI office and register their new residence address. If they do not apply within this period, a further 15-day interval is provided for them to rectify their addresses by paying a fine of KD20.



In order to rectify their address in PACI records, the applicant must provide documents to verify their new residential address, including either a new house ownership record or an allocation card for the new property. If they are tenants, they must provide the lease contract and a copy of the house document to register their new address.

Regarding the ongoing difficulties in obtaining an appointment to rectify fictitious addresses, which in some cases involve more than 15 days of wait time, Al-Kandari explained that the Authority plans to open external centers to alleviate congestion at the main center and reduce transaction processing time, and, if needed, call in employees on weekends to address the backlog.

He also pointed out that the KD20 fine being imposed for changing residential address after the 30-day grace period, is reasonable, and is meant to facilitate the address change process. Al-Kandari noted that the original fine mandated by Article 33 of the PACI law, for not informing any change in civil ID information, is KD100.

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Spending on bonuses, allowances surge in last three years

The 2023/2024 budget allocates KD 1.7 billion for thirty-one different allowances for government employees, a 30.7% rise from the KD 1.3 billion allocated in 2022/2023.

Bonuses and allowances in the general budget have witnessed a significant rise over the past three years. The government's budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) had set aside around KD1.7 billion as allowances for 31 different allowances to government employees. The allocation for last fiscal year marked an increase of nearly 31 percent from the KD1.3 billion earmarked for this purpose in the budget for FY22-24, and a

stupendous surge of 103 percent from the KD834 million allocated for this purpose in FY 21-22.

Commenting on the surge in expenditure on bonuses and allowances over the past many years, Minister of Finance Anwar Al-Mudhaf stated, "The general budget suffers from continuous and unjustified growth in allowances, which must not continue, especially since most of them have outlived the agencies that granted them." He expressed his intention to review the allowances and work to reduce them in the coming period.

The general budget allocated significant sums for various types of allowances, many of which have increased in recent years. For example, the nature of work allowance received KD295 million, a 21 percent increase from the KD242.6 million allocated in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Danger allowances rose from KD130.4 million to approximately KD168.6 million in the 2023/2024 budget, marking a 29.2 percent increase.



The allocation for 'representation allowance' was KD81.5 million, an 8.8 percent increase from the KD74.9 million allocated in 2021/2022. The 'Nuba Allowance' saw a 40.9 percent increase, rising from KD36.6 million in 2021/2022 to KD51.6 million in the last fiscal year.

The allowances disbursed under 'site allowance' increased by 23.7 percent, reaching approximately KD48.9 million in the last fiscal year, compared to about KD39.5 million in

2021/2022. Similarly, the 'medals' allowance saw a rise from KD29.9 million to KD40.8 million, marking a 36.4 percent increase.

Other allowances also experienced increases: the supervision allowance reached KD47.3 million, the 'guard' allowance was KD37.7 million, the 'housing' allowance amounted to KD28.8 million, and the car allowance for leaders stood at about KD2.4 million. In the past two years, new allowances have been added to the list of payments to government employees. These include an 'in-service' cash allowance with an allocation of approximately KD485 million in the FY23-24. The 'reservation' allowance was also introduced last year, valued at KD109 million, along with an 'end-of-service' cash allowance worth KD35 million.

Employee bonuses also witnessed remarkable increases over the past three years. Bonuses and allowances together accounted for KD6.016 billion in FY23-24 budget, compared to KD4.647 billion in FY21-22 budget.

Vietnamese Embassy mourns passing away of Party General Secretary



Embassy of Vietnam mourned the passing away of the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong, on 19 July. A condolence book was opened at the embassy for two days starting on 24 July to register condolences of the public in Kuwait. Dozens of heads of diplomatic missions, community members, and citizens came to offer their condolences. The embassy also lowered its flags to half-staff in mourning for the deceased.

A statement issued by the embassy noted that Comrade Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, made numerous significant and distinguished contributions to the Party and the nation during his nearly 60 years of service. In



recognition of his contributions both to Vietnam and globally, the Party and the state honored him with many high decorations and medals. The statement added that the passing of Comrade Nguyen Phu Trong is a significant loss to the Party, the state, and the Vietnamese people.

Nguyen Phu Trong was born on 14 April 1944, in Dong Hoi Town, Dong Anh District, Hanoi City. He joined the Communist Party of Vietnam on 19 December 1967. From April 2021 to the present, he served as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, as well as serving in several high-level committees of the State.

In recognition of his exceptionally great and distinguished contributions to the revolutionary progress of the Party and the



nation, he was awarded numerous honors, including the Gold Star Medal from the Party and the State, the 55-Year Party Membership Badge, and several prestigious Vietnamese and international decorations. These include the 'National Gold Medal' from the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the 'Friendship Medal' from the Party and State of the People's Republic of China, the 'Lenin Prize,' the highest award from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia, and the 'José Martí Medal' from the Party and State of the Republic of Cuba.

On the second and final day of the opening of the condolence book, the Vietnamese embassy received several mourners. Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Sameeh Johar Hayat, extended his condolences to the



Vietnamese Ambassador H.E. Nguyen Duc Thang, on Thursday morning.

Indian ambassador H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, also visited the Vietnamese Embassy and recorded his message in the condolence book. "I convey my deepest condolences on the sad demise of Nguyen Phu Trong.

His contribution to the strengthening of India-Vietnam comprehensive strategic partnership is well-acknowledged. The Government and people of India stand in grief with the Government and people of Vietnam in this difficult time."

It is noteworthy that a number of ambassadors accredited to Kuwait and public figures arrived at the Vietnamese Embassy on Wednesday and Thursday, to offer their condolences to the Vietnamese ambassador.

ZPavanoo Q8 9th anniversary Zumba event, a huge success

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

ZPavanoo Q8, one of Kuwait's top Zumba teams, held its 9th year anniversary celebration with a fitness event featured different Zumba teams. The event was held at Al Jawharat Al Saleh Gym in Reggae Friday morning.

The Zumba event commenced with invocations of prayers followed immediately by welcome remarks from Raquel Sta

Cruz and President of Coalition of Filipino Organization's President Chris Hernandez. Warm-up workout by The Times Journalist Ricky Laxa backed up by members of Z Crew and ZPavanoo Q8 kicked off the series of workouts. Intermission numbers were delivered by Momshies and ZPavababes. The

Zumba teams, which led the crowd to an exciting series of workouts were Z Pablik, Z CRew, Zayaw Q8, V Squad, Z Power, Fahaheel Wellness Warriors, Indos Angels, Z Jam, Jass FM On Line and individual presenters.

Present in the event were nurses from Philippine Association of Nurses in

Kuwait (PANIK), provided free medical services. Lunch packs were given out to everyone and plaques of recognition and appreciation were handed out to the recipients. Founder and President of ZPavanoo Q8 Honey Roxas concluded the event with a closing remarks.



Municipality to repossess unused government buildings, land

Following an extended and in-depth study of properties and lands allocated to various government entities, the Ministry of Finance's 'Committee for the Inventory of Unused Lands and Buildings and Rented Sites of Government Agencies', has published a report that was submitted to the Cabinet last week.

The report paints a stark picture of the waste of public funds by many government entities through renting private buildings and land at enormous cost, even as properties allocated by the government lie vacant or unused.

The report showed that 30 out of 55 entities own unused lands and buildings, while 35 entities hold rented sites. The total value of building rental contracts with these entities is estimated to be more than KD30 million.

The committee held meetings and site inspections over a period of eight months to examine all the unused buildings and land allocated to the various government ministries and other public entities. According to the initial report submitted to the Cabinet there are 344 unused plots of land within the country and eight abroad.

Meanwhile, the unused buildings within the country totalled 161, while abroad there are two buildings, both of which belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In terms of land, the Ministry of Electricity leads with 117 unused plots, followed by the Ministry of Interior at 54, Public Works with 45, Finance at 29, and Insurance with 15. For buildings, the Ministry of Communications tops the list with 147 unused buildings, followed by Kuwait Municipality at six and Zakat House with three. The report stated that 14 government agencies were not included due to their failure to respond to the Ministry of Finance's requests in accordance with the Cabinet's decision.

According to the Municipality laws and bylaws, the procedures for



taking charge of buildings and land allotted to government agencies, and the process of withdrawing allotments if the properties lie unused are as follows:

- Government agencies must take charge of the land within two years from the date of issuance of the allocation decision; otherwise, the decision will be considered void.
- The concerned entities have a period of six years to implement the designated project on the land for which licenses were issued. If this period is exceeded, the license will be considered void.
- Kuwait Municipality does not cancel the licensing decision after the expiry of the time period.

The report also noted the following obstacles to obtaining accurate data on unused lands and buildings:

- Difficulty accessing data due to the lack of a unified government-approved database or Geographic Information System (GIS) to review and verify accuracy.
- Non-receipt of responses from 14 government agencies, leaving the committee without data or information about unused lands, buildings, and rented sites.

municipality.

- Absence of a mechanism to regulate the reuse of buildings not utilized by the authorities.
- Lack of a mechanism to determine the period during which government agencies must complete building rental contracts from the private sector.
- No mechanism for disposing of unused lands and buildings outside Kuwait.

Based on the report and its recommendations, the Council of Ministers has tasked the Ministry of Finance, in coordination with relevant entities, to establish the necessary controls and procedures to regulate the disposal of unused government lands and buildings both inside and outside Kuwait.

This includes setting up controls

and procedures for regulating the rental of buildings from the private sector and completing all statements and data on unused lands and buildings. The council also directed the Ministry of Finance to "coordinate with the Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Civil Information, and other relevant authorities to study the unification of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at the state level.

The goal is to create a central system containing detailed data on all lands and buildings owned by the state and government agencies, supervised by one competent authority, with the potential for other relevant authorities to benefit from it." According to the decision, the Ministry of Finance is required to provide a report within three months on the procedures it has been assigned to carry out.

PACI to raise Civil ID fees, fines imposed for late collection of IDs

In a media interview last week, the Acting Director of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Mansour Al-Mithen, announced several upcoming revisions to the fees, fines, and procedures related to civil ID services in Kuwait.

Al-Mithen disclosed that the authority is set to introduce higher fees for issuing, renewing, or replacing lost civil ID cards, as well as increasing fines for those who fail to collect their civil ID on time.

Clarifying on the proposed new measures, Al-Mithen said, "We are working to find a comprehensive solution to the crisis of late issuance and accumulation of civil ID cards in delivery devices. One key measure includes imposing a fine of KD20 on those who fail to collect their civil ID cards on time." He added that the initiative aims to streamline the distribution process, and to accommodate increased production of cards by partnering with multiple companies for card delivery.

He also noted that Article 33 of PACI Law mandates individuals to report any change in their residence. If the property owner deletes the previous resident's address from their property, the concerned person will be informed and have 30 days to rectify their address on the PACI records.

Also, in order to control lease contracts in commercial and investment buildings, PACI plans to obligate landlords to report both new and departing tenants thereby regulating the process of renting and vacating apartments.

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Lack of integrated vision, legal framework, and infrastructure hamper tourism

Key barriers to private sector investment in tourism sector include outdated legislation, limited lease periods, a lack of government strategy, and weak tourism infrastructure.

Tourism sector in Kuwait has been lagging its peers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states for decades. While other countries in the region have made rapid headway in building tourism infrastructure and venues to attract local and international visitors, Kuwait tourism initiative has been mired by political standoffs, bureaucratic red-tape, inapt laws and regulations, and a lack of coordination among public and private sector.

Reports show that in 2023, Kuwaiti hotels had the lowest hotel occupancy rate in the Gulf of 41.4 percent — with room income remaining stagnant at 24 dinars.

There is no doubt that the Kuwaiti private sector has the potential to invest in the tourism industry; however, it faces several challenges that complicate its efforts.

Until recently, private sector tourism projects could not lease sites for more than three years or renew leases without government approval. Additionally, they were unable to undertake



any construction work on their sites without obtaining approval from the State Property Authority. These clauses were perhaps intended to discourage tourism projects by the private sector, as no investor would be willing to

invests millions of dinars on a project without guarantees of having lease contracts renewed after three years

According to experts, among the major hurdles are the absence of an overarching

government strategy to develop the tourism sector, the lack of investment in tourism infrastructure, and a legislative environment that discourages tourism projects and needed legal reforms. The importance of addressing these challenges through a strategic vision, effective planning, and collaboration between the private sector and the government are key to improving tourism in the country. Additionally providing the necessary support to enhance tourism infrastructure and develop tourist destinations in Kuwait is crucial. Overcoming these challenges will boost Kuwait's competitiveness as a tourist destination and improve the overall tourism experience.

Given the private sector's reluctance to invest in tourism, it is essential to enact supportive laws with long-term usufruct rights, establish clear goals, develop a transparent plan and strategy for sector development, and create a specialized government body dedicated to the tourism sector.

Olympics 2024, paving a path to peace, solidarity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from break-dancing and surfing, to the more 'core' Olympic competitions of running, jumping and swimming.

Over the next fortnight, Paris 2024 promises to be a stunning display of athletic prowess, showcasing the amazing agility, speed, strength, and skills of the athletes. Each event is certain to bring out the best efforts of competitors as they strive to be faster, go higher, or be stronger than their opponents. Each victory will also be the culmination of years of relentless practice, of ruthless competitiveness, and resolute determination to be the very best.

Every effort by the athletes and players exemplifies the eternal human spirit that seeks to triumph against odds and overcome adversities. They embody the timeless and unbridled human passion to compete and to win, to rise above the rest, and to be acknowledged as the best. It is no wonder that the Olympic Games capture the imagination of people everywhere and from every walk of life.

The Olympics etches in our collective memories those transcendental moments of triumphs and tragedies that every Olympic event unfolds. The heart-rending displays of agonizing pain at losing, and the ecstasy at winning, stirs deep emotions within each one of us. The Games also bring out the raw intensity of competition, the sheer determination, and the stupendous stamina of athletes and players, as they push the limits of human physical and mental endurance.

Exactly a century after the last Summer Olympics was held in Paris in 1924, and first Winter Olympics was held in the city of Chamonix in France that same year, the Olympic Games have now returned to Paris. Having previously hosted the Games in 1900 and 1924, Paris will become the second city, after London, to hold the Summer Olympics three times. France is also in the unique position of playing host in the modern era, to a total of six Olympics, including three Winter Olympics,

The 2024 Olympics is being held in venues across Paris, as well as in 16 other cities spread across Metropolitan France, and its overseas territory. For instance, basketball preliminaries and handball finals will be held in Lille, which is 225 km from the host city. Football will be held in five other cities, while sailing and some football games will be held in the Mediterranean city of Marseille, which is 777

km from Paris. Meanwhile, the surfing event is scheduled to be held in the overseas territory of French Polynesia, which is more than 15,700 km from Paris.

Similarly, the Olympic torch relay has traversed great distances. The relay, which began with the lighting of the Olympic torch at Olympia in Greece on 16 April, then crossed Greece to reach France by boat on 9 May. The relay then visited 65 areas in Metropolitan France and six overseas French territories, before concluding with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron at the Jardins du Trocadéro stadium on Friday.

With Paris 2024, France and Paris hopes to outdo all previous Olympics in every aspect, from dazzling displays of opening and closing ceremonies, to the launch of exciting new sporting events, and holding many events in public buildings and plazas. Paris 2024 will also be promoting gender equality and diversity in a big way. This was apparent in some of the artistic performances staged on the opening day.

According to official sources and media reports, Paris 2024 will record a number of firsts for an Olympic Games. In a distinct divergence



from recent Olympics, many of the events in Paris will be held in temporary venues located within the city center. This not only makes the venues more pedestrian-friendly, it also gives visitors a chance to enjoy the city's many imposing classic buildings and historical sites.

For instance, beach volleyball will be held under the iconic Eiffel Tower. Breaking (break-dance), BMX freestyle, skateboarding, and 3-on-3 basketball will be at the Place de la Concorde, more widely known for its gory past during the

French Revolution. Fencing and taekwondo will be at the Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, an opulent exhibition hall built for the Paris Expo in 1900, and equestrian events will be at the historical Château de Versailles, a major tourist attractions in the world today.

Considering that Paris is the world's gastronomic capital, Paris 2024 also promises to be a food festival, albeit one with an emphasis on health and environmental sustainability. Olympic eateries will serve double the amount of plant-based food relative to previous Olympics, with 30 percent of the menu comprising plant-based alternatives, including vegan chicken nuggets and hot dogs. Over 200 chefs will also prepare more than 40,000 meals every day to feed the 15,000 athletes, coaches and trainers at the Olympic Village restaurant.

The Olympic and Paralympic medals are also unique. On the obverse they feature an embedded hexagon-shaped iron scrap taken from the original construction of the Eiffel Tower, in a homage to the legacy of Gustave Eiffel, the French engineer who designed the eponymous tower in Paris. On the reverse, the medals feature Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, inside the Panathenaic Stadium in Greece, the venue of the first modern Olympics in 1896.

The Paralympic medals also feature a distinctive design with lines engraved on the edge of each medal in order to be distinguished by touch. Universal braille is also engraved on the medals in a befitting homage to its French inventor Louis Braille. Around 5,084 medals, produced by the French mint Monnaie de Paris, and designed by the Paris-based luxury jewelry firm of Chaumet, will be awarded during the Summer and Paralympic Games.

Besides the excitement of watching performances of national contingents, favored athletes and teams, as well as enjoying the thrills and skills on display over the next two weeks, the Olympics also provide an opportunity for all of us to emulate the timeless values of Olympism — 'to encourage effort, preserve human dignity, and develop harmony'.

Over the years, the three Olympic ideals have evolved and today they express a more contemporary version — to strive for excellence, to respect others and their diversity, and to celebrate friendships. These ideals form the corner-stones on which the Olympic Games aim to build a better, brighter and more peaceful world for all of us.



Economy remains in recession, inflation highest in GCC

Kuwait's economy is projected to remain in recession this year, which could be reflected in the country's real income and GDP, employment rate and industrial production, as well as in wholesale and retail sales.

Inflation in the country projected at 3.2 percent also remains the highest among its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) peers. Inflationary pressures bearing on Kuwait include the surge in global food and energy prices, the depreciation of the Kuwaiti dinar against the US dollar, and the government's expansionary fiscal policy. The economy's heavy reliance on revenue from oil exports, and persistent lack of fiscal and economic reforms have only helped to

exacerbate the situation.

Other factors contributing to the expected economic downturn include OPEC+ production cuts and a lackluster global economic environment. In particular, the OPEC+ production cuts have dealt a substantial blow to the economy, which is further compounded by a sluggish global demand for Kuwaiti goods and services.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, collectively known as OPEC+, initially planned to increase oil production in 2023. However, the alliance decided to extend production cuts until 2025.

But it is not Kuwait alone that is experiencing economic sluggishness. The GCC region as a whole



is witnessing a weaker economic performance than initially forecast, with average growth in

the region sliding to 2.4 percent. According to economic analysts, the OPEC+ decision to keep oil production low for longer, has precipitated weaker economic growth in the Gulf states of Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, which are now expected to grow at the rate of 0.6, 2.2, 1.5 and 2.3 percents respectively

Despite overall regional economic growth being tempered by challenges, some countries in the region have exhibited signs of resilience. The UAE emerges as a standout performer within the region, with projected growth of 4 percent. This robust performance is attributed to the country's emphasis on economic diversification and the successful hosting of Expo 2020 Dubai.

CITRA launches 'Kashif' to identify bogus callers

Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has launched the 'Kashif' service, which displays the name and number of the caller, in order to enable legal entities to document incoming calls through telecommunications networks in Kuwait.

The Authority, which developed the service in collaboration with local telecommunications companies and relevant government agencies, noted that the Kashif service implements the Caller Name Identification Regulation for public telecommunications networks. The service is aimed at boosting user confidence in the telecommunication networks in Kuwait.

The service specifically targets calls from unknown sources, and helps users by ensuring that the calls they receive from legal government entities and private sector companies are from the original source to reduce calls from unknown



sources. Users can now identify the name of the caller and whether the call is from a mobile or landline number within Kuwait.

The authority emphasized that while this feature provides initial contact identification, users should still follow safety and security guidelines provided by government and private companies on not disclosing personal information such as account numbers, PINs, or security codes to others.

Masterclass Lifestyle announces 20th batch of 'One-day Baking Class'



Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops (MLW) announced last week the start of the 20th session of their 'One Day Baking Class'. Employers and sponsors of attendees of past sessions were full of praise for the classes, and many suggested that more workshops should be conducted so that more students could be accommodated.

"My employer could not believe that the baked products I took home were my work from a one day baking class, they were so impressed that in three hours, I was able to acquire new skills and knowledge. They encouraged me to pursue and attend more workshops" commented Lorna Cabuyao, a Filipina household helper.

Cabuyao added that the bread she made was so different from the others sold in the local bakeries; "The bread has better texture and the scent of yeast is not present. I tried making Fatayer from the same dough and discovered that hand-crafted and made dough has better results than that of machine produced," stated Cabuyao.

Batool, a Kuwaiti national thanked the

master chefs for the patience and knowledge they shared during the classes. "I learned so much from these workshops including new techniques and products. My family always looks forward to what I have to bring home after the classes and they love them. I am definitely pursuing the classes" added Batool.

Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops provide up to date information and hands-on experience in baking breads and pastries relevant to the local market, it aims to encourage aspiring bakers and enthusiasts to discover new skills and enhance their talents through closely supervised sessions by the masterchefs. Classes are held weekly every Friday and Sunday from 9 am till 12 noon and 2 pm till 5 pm.

In a statement, Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops extended its gratitude to Master Chefs, Trainers, Support Team, Vloggers: POT TV, Ser Paul TV, Kuya Pasabuy, Chef Anita Balmores, Berry Blast and Friendi Mobile for contributing aprons and toques for chef students. Special thanks to The Times Kuwait for being its media partner in the projects.

For more details of the classes, send message to whatsapp: 55650296

MoC to discontinue copper networks at end of July

In a statement issued last week, the Ministry of Communications (MoC) has noted that with effect from Wednesday, 31 July, fixed landline telephone connections using copper network cables will be discontinued in several areas.

Areas affected by the change are Salmiya, Ras Al-Salmiya, Salwa, Rumaihiya, Al-Bidaa, Fintas Agricultural, and Kuwait City. Official spokesperson for the ministry, Dr. Ahmed

Al-Hussaini explained that subscribers to the copper network have the option to transfer to the latest fiber-optic network available in these areas. He added that the transition to fiber optic technology will offer residents significantly more reliable connections.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Ministry is urging residents in the affected areas to switch to the fiber optic network as soon as possible. To facilitate this process, residents can contact their local telephone exchange to request an Optical Network Terminal (ONT) device.

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British Ambassador lauds Kuwait's efforts to support UNRWA

The United Kingdom announced last week that it will resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), pledging £21 million in new funds to support its work in Gaza, the West Bank, and the wider region.

Elaborating on the renewed funding for UNRWA, British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis, applauded Kuwait's leadership in drumming international support for the Agency and its relief operations. She noted, "I would like to acknowledge Kuwait's

leadership in building support for UNRWA within the international community, with the UK having joined 117 fellow UN Member States in signing the statement Kuwait led, alongside Jordan and Slovenia, at UNRWA's Pledging Conference in New York on 12th July.

"The UK's funding for UNRWA is one element of a broader package of support we are delivering through several humanitarian organizations, including UNICEF, the UN World Food Programme, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, the British Red Cross and British charity UK-Med, which has established field hospitals in Al Mawasi and Deir El Balah as part of its biggest humanitarian operation in its 30-year history.

"Working jointly with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the David Nott Foundation, the UK funded and delivered specialist training



for Kuwaiti doctors deploying to Gaza. The UK Government is also lobbying for greater, quicker access for aid into Gaza, supporting efforts to broker an immediate ceasefire and has pledged £15 million in financial and technical support to the Palestinian Authority."

Minister pledges to address power, water shortages

Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW), as well as the Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri, emphasized his commitment to prioritizing and fully addressing the country's electricity, water, and network development needs.

The minister's comments followed his meeting last week with the ministry's senior management to discuss the current status of power generation and water distillation

completion timelines regarding electric power generation and water desalination projects, renewable energy initiatives, network development work, and installation of smart meters in more areas.

During the meeting, the minister reportedly stressed on the importance of involving the private sector in both traditional and renewable power and water distillation projects, drawing on the successful experience of the Az Zour North Phase 1 project.

He also highlighted the need to raise community awareness about the importance of rationalizing consumption, especially during peak summer times, and expanding the 'Hafiz' rationalization program, which offers discounts on electricity and water bills for proven rationalization of these vital resources.

The latest developments in financial and administrative matters were also discussed, with the minister emphasizing the importance of improving the efficiency and expediting the process of collecting the ministry's due bills, and following-up on tenders with the relevant regulatory authorities.

He also noted that it was critical to rehabilitate and train all national staff in the ministry, and in particular, recent graduates employed by MEW. Dr. Bushehri urged the ministry's management to foster team spirit, commit to completing their tasks promptly, and work diligently to serve both citizens and residents in accordance with established guidelines and procedures.



plants, as well as the latest developments in electrical grids and water networks. The meeting also considered the anticipated electrical loads for the current and next month.

In a statement following the meeting, Minister Bushehri asserted that the ministry is fully prepared to meet the power and water needs of various categories of customers during the peak load periods.

The meeting also reviewed future directions and implementation and

Ministry ready to seal deal for 30 MW solar power plant in Jahra

Kuwait is poised to award the main contract for the first phase of a major solar power project. According to MEED, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy is set to finalize an agreement for a 30-megawatt solar power plant in Jahra Governorate. Although bids were submitted nearly two years ago, the contract award process has faced substantial delays.

Sources familiar with the matter say that a substantial number of bidders who submitted the lowest offers were disqualified during the evaluation phase. Due to this high rate of disqualification, the ministry is now considering

awarding the contract to the bidder who presented the sixth-lowest bid.

However, there is still a chance that the tender may be reissued to resolve the issues faced during the evaluation process.

The initial phase of the project, estimated to cost around \$85 million, will be carried out under an engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contract.

This extensive scope of work includes constructing a 30-megawatt solar power plant, installing solar panels, setting up robust safety and security systems, installing transformers, and building essential ancillary facilities.

Union Budget 2024 balances today's needs, tomorrow's priorities

"The focus on promoting entrepreneurship, skilling, and MSMEs is commendable. The scheme offering internship opportunities in the top 500 companies will enable students to effectively translate their academic knowledge into practical professional skills, facilitating a smoother transition into the workforce," said Adeeb Ahamed, MD of LuLu Financial Holdings.

"The Union Budget 2024 is a thought-provoking plan that balances the needs of today while setting priorities for the future. However, some may argue it could have done more to address immediate concerns," commented Adeeb Ahamed, MD of LuLu Financial Holdings, on India's 2024 budget.

"The focus on promoting entrepreneurship, skilling, and MSMEs is commendable. The scheme offering internship opportunities in the top 500 companies will enable students to effectively translate their academic knowledge into practical professional skills, facilitating a smoother transition into the workforce," said Adeeb Ahamed.

The MD of LuLu Financial Holdings further said, "MSMEs have a vital role to play in the country's development going forward, and the moves taken in this budget to increase credit access and financial support will help these companies to scale and modernize. The initiatives to ensure credit access to MSMEs during their stress period and to increase the limit in MUDRA loans are welcome ones."

"I am also happy to see the initiative to bring out a Financial Sector Vision and Strategy Document. This will provide a clear agenda for all stakeholders over the next five years, ensuring that the efforts of the government, regulators, financial institutions, and market participants are aligned towards common goals," he said.

"At the same time, there could have been more incentives for the tourism and hospitality industry. Rethinking the lending norms and envisioning hospitality development as a vital part of infrastructure development were necessary. With the growing use of AI in other sectors, tourism and hospitality are poised to become major drivers of job creation, and the sector needs more support,"



said Adeeb Ahamed.

"There could also have been more in terms of measures to attract NRI investments to the country. Reducing corporate tax for foreign companies to 35 percent is a welcome development, and the move to abolish the Angel Tax for startups is indeed commendable. But the NRI community was expecting more policies and reforms to boost NRI investment in India," he said.

"Overall, while this budget is a balanced one and will stand the country in good stead over the long run, one could always argue that there are missed opportunities," added Adeeb Ahamed.

KOC awards consultancy contract to develop renewable energy

Kuwait Oil Company has taken a significant step in driving the country's renewable energy ambitions by awarding a consultancy contract to the Houston-based US firm of KBR, a leading science, technology and engineering solutions, and consultancy services provider.

The contract is to develop a phased strategy for the deployment by 2050 of 17GW of wind and solar power, combined with power storage capability. The renewable power capability will be linked to the production of green hydrogen for internal industrial use, as well as for export purposes. The consultancy work is expected to



be performed over the next 18 months, with KBR developing a market analysis, technical and commercial feasibility studies, as well training of Kuwaiti nationals.

Kuwait is also taking other steps to enhance its renewable energy generation capabilities. For example, it is currently pre-qualifying companies for its first utility-scale solar PV project. In March, the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW) confirmed a plan that would see Kuwait have 22.1 GW of renewable energy installed capacity by 2030 as part of its new 20-year strategy that ends in 2050.

The MEW plan is truly a bold and ambitious one, both in its scope and in the five-year period allocated to complete it, especially considering that Kuwait's current installed solar and wind capacity is a meager 70MW, and with no new projects awarded since 2018. Despite this apparent contradiction, having a company of KOC's reputation and capabilities now leading the country's renewable energy and green hydrogen production could provide the much-needed impetus to achieve Kuwait's target of meeting 15 percent of its energy needs from renewable sources.

Discovering Nuremberg

A Journey Through History, Culture, and Culinary Delights

By Nourah Khan

Travel Writer, The Times Kuwait

Nuremberg, a historic city in the heart of Bavaria, a state in southeast Germany, is a treasure trove of cultural and historical attractions, making it a popular destination for tourists. Known for its medieval architecture, rich history, and vibrant cultural scene, Nuremberg offers a variety of experiences for visitors.

During this summer, I spent several days in Munich, and since I always like to explore cities that I have never visited before, I found that Nuremberg is no more than two hours away by car, so I rented a car and I decided to visit it and explore tourism there.



Nuremberg has a profound historical significance, particularly related to the Holy Roman Empire and World War II. The city's well-preserved medieval architecture provides a glimpse into its storied past.

Key historical sites in the city include:

Nuremberg Castle (Kaiserburg): This iconic castle, perched atop a hill, offers panoramic views of the city and houses a museum that delves into the history of Nuremberg and the Holy Roman Empire.

Old Town (Altstadt): The charming old town is a maze of cobblestone streets, half-timbered houses, and Gothic churches. Highlights include the Church of Our Lady (Frauenkirche) and the beautiful Hauptmarkt square, famous for its annual Christmas market.

Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds: This museum is located at the site of the former Nazi Party rallies and provides an in-depth look at the rise of the Nazi party, World War II, and the Nuremberg Trials.

Nuremberg is a city rich in culture, offering a variety of museums, galleries, and festivals:



Germanisches National-museum: The largest museum of cultural history in the German-speaking world, it boasts an extensive collection of art and cultural artifacts from prehistoric times to the present.

Albrecht Dürer's House: This museum is dedicated to the life and works of Albrecht Dürer, one of the most famous German Renaissance artists, who was born and lived in Nuremberg.

Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival: Held biennially, this festival showcases films that address human rights issues from around the world.



If you visit Nuremberg, do not miss trying the famous Nuremberg Sausages (Nürnberger Rostbratwurst). These small, flavorful sausages are typically grilled and served with sauerkraut or potato salad. Also, you have to try Lebkuchen: A type of gingerbread that has been a Nuremberg specialty for centuries, especially popular during the Christmas season.

Festivals and Events: I recommend visiting Nuremberg during the Christmas season, because Nuremberg is known as one of the best Christmas markets in Germany.



The Nuremberg Christmas Market is not only one of the best in Germany, but it is also one of the oldest and most famous Christmas markets in the world. The event transforms the city into a winter wonderland with festive stalls, traditional crafts, and holiday treats.



In addition to the Christmas Market, Nuremberg also hosts a variety of festivals and events throughout the year, attracting visitors from around the globe: These include the Nuremberg Old Town Festival (Altstadtfest), which is an autumn festival that celebrates the city's culture and traditions with music, dance, food, and historical reenactments.

Another festival is Rock im Park, which is one of Germany's largest rock music festivals, held annually in Nuremberg, attracting international artists and thousands of music fans.

Beyond its historical and cultural attractions, Nuremberg is a vibrant, modern city with a thriving economy and a high quality of life. The city is home to numerous parks and green spaces, including the picturesque Pegnitz River that runs through its center. Nuremberg's public transportation system is efficient, making it easy for tourists to explore the city's attractions.

I would recommend that you stay no less than four full nights to enjoy this beautiful city, which blends its rich historic past with a dynamic present. From exploring medieval landmarks to indulging in local culinary delights and participating in lively festivals, visitors to Nuremberg are sure to find a wealth of experiences to enjoy. Whether you are a history buff, a culture enthusiast, or simply looking to experience the charm of a Bavarian city, Nuremberg has something to offer everyone.

Noura Khan, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 97k followers on her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.



Fly to space for your next holiday



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

As humanity continues to push the boundaries of exploration, space tourism is emerging as a frontier ripe with possibilities. At the forefront of this revolution is EOS-X SPACE, a pioneering company of Spanish origin that has launched a groundbreaking initiative that promises to redefine our relationship with space by offering space tourism by 2025.

Abu Dhabi will host the company's most ambitious complex globally on Yas Island. The facility will feature a shuttle, spaceport, and hotel complex. A third facility is also planned for Mexico in 2026. EOS-X SPACE is



more than just a venture into space; it is a bold vision to democratize space travel. The initiative aims to create a seamless, safe, and exhilarating experience for tourists, allowing them to see Earth from the cosmos, experience weightlessness, and witness the beauty of the universe firsthand. Unlike other space travel companies, which rely on rockets and require extensive physical training, the EOS-X SPACE capsules accommodate up to eight people and are lifted by an eco-friendly helium balloon that reaches the stratosphere's edge at 40,000 meters. Space tourists will enjoy the

breathtaking views of space, the blue halo, and the Earth's curvature during the 5-hour trip.

Kemel Kharbachi, Founder and CEO of EOS-X SPACE, announced that the company is finalizing the development of the spaceship capsules, the necessary validation tests, and the collaboration with the National Institute for Aerospace Technology in Spain. The comfortable journey requires no arduous preparation and includes a personalized week-long program featuring cultural, gastronomic, and wellness experiences. The cost per passenger starts from \$163,000.

"There will come a time, similar to the aviation industry, when this way of seeing the world becomes much more accessible. For now, we are offering an ultra-luxury product aimed at a particular clientele," explains founder, Kemel Kharbachi.

The EOS-X experience begins with a pre-flight orientation, where passengers learn about the spacecraft's systems, the journey's itinerary, and the science behind space travel. The launch is a thrilling spectacle, with the spacecraft lifting off into the sky, accelerating through the atmosphere, and eventually breaking free into the vacuum of space.

Once in space, passengers will experience microgravity, floating weightlessly as they marvel at the Earth's curvature and the vast expanse of the universe. The journey includes unique opportunities for spacewalks, scientific experiments, and even time for personal reflection and stargazing. The return to Earth is a gentle descent, with the spacecraft's advanced systems ensuring a smooth landing, marking the end of an unforgettable adventure.

By making space accessible, EOS-X SPACE hopes to ignite a passion for science, technology, and exploration, foster international collaboration, promote STEM education, and encourage sustainable practices. The initiative is also expected to stimulate significant economic growth by creating new industries and job opportunities in space tourism and related fields, making it an attractive investment prospect.

EOS-X paves the way for the future of space tourism and stands as a symbol of human ingenuity and aspiration. The journey to space is no longer the domain of a select few but is becoming a reality for many. EOS-X is set to inspire a new era of exploration, where the wonders of the universe are within reach and the dream of space travel is shared by all.

The company estimates that total revenues from Spain and Abu Dhabi in its launch year could reach \$353 million. In addition, it expects a gross profit margin of 19 percent. By 2029, the company seeks to achieve a turnover of \$1.127 billion and a gross profit of \$324 million, marking a profit growth of 23.3 percent annually.



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

Peacebuilding in Middle East Requires Women



Anne-Marie Slaughter and Xanthe Scharff

Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department, is CEO of the think tank New America, Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, and the author of *Renewal: From Crisis to Transformation in Our Lives, Work, and Politics*

Xanthe Scharff, a non-resident senior fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, is a member of the Board of Advisers at PhilanthPro, Co-Founder of The Fuller Project, a global newsroom dedicated to journalism about women, and Founder and Board Chair Emerita of Advancing Girls' Education in Africa.



On July 19, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that negotiations on an agreement to release hostages held in Gaza and establish a ceasefire are nearing the finish line. Such an agreement is long overdue and could lay the foundations for a peace settlement. But to build peace, rather than simply declare it, policymakers must engage a wider range of actors, starting with women.

Fortunately, this process is already underway, according to Israeli peace activist Yael Braudo-Bahat, who met with US officials on May 30. As the co-director of Women Wage Peace, a powerful grassroots peace movement in Israel with more than 50,000 members, Braudo-Bahat moves in lockstep with her Palestinian counterpart M.H. (who goes by her initials for security reasons), the co-founder of Women of the Sun, a peace organization with more than 3,000 members in the West Bank and Gaza.

The two organizations are working together to advocate a non-violent resolution to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, notably having

women in prominent leadership roles convened in Ramallah to join forces in calling for peace. And on July 1, dozens of Israeli organizations, including Women Wage Peace, held a massive peace rally in Tel Aviv, helping end a decade of political division within the movement.

Now, they need more attention and resources. In particular, some of the \$26 billion that the United States will spend this fiscal year on support for Israel and humanitarian relief in Gaza should fund these women peacebuilders — an agenda enshrined in US law. After Congress passed the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, the US adopted a national strategy in 2019 to ensure that women are 'prepared and increasingly able to participate in efforts that promote stable and lasting peace'.

The Biden administration issued an updated women, peace, and security strategy and action plan in 2023, citing research that shows that durable peace agreements are 35% more likely when women participate in negotiations.

The updated plan calls for a review of all efforts by different US agencies to promote women's meaningful participation in peace operations and security matters. And in the meantime, an elaborate web of offices, policies, and funding streams within the US government — including the Office of Global Women's Issues in the State Department, the Gender Policy Council in the White House, and the Women, Peace, and Security Caucus in the House of Representatives — has been built to support this agenda. Just this month, Blinken hosted a women, peace, and security reception at the NATO Summit, although he did not mention women's involvement in talks about Israel and Palestine.

But despite these wide-ranging efforts, there is still a large gap between rhetoric and reality. The top US policymakers negotiating a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas are men. Moreover, American officials recently participated in United Nations-sponsored talks with the Taliban that excluded Afghan women. And globally, only one of the 18 peace agreements reached in 2022 was signed or witnessed by a woman.

There is still time, however, for US policymakers to change course. Regardless of whether an agreement on a ceasefire and hostage release is concluded or remains stubbornly out of reach, the Biden administration should commit to including women in all future US-mediated talks.

At the same time, the US should join with countries in the region and Europe to launch a broader peacebuilding initiative that puts Israeli and Palestinian voices and needs at the center of negotiations. Communities on the ground, including civil-society groups and women leaders, could thus participate more directly in the process of reaching a new settlement. This may help avoid the failure of the Oslo Accords, which were negotiated in secret and excluded both women and grassroots organizations.

Policymakers should also hold more visible meetings with civil-society leaders in the region. Peacebuilders face an uphill battle in communities that are being bombarded by disinformation and propaganda. US officials can amplify the efforts of these women by standing for photos with them, mentioning their work in public statements, and sending envoys to visit them — as other countries have done. War is still largely the province of

men, while the work of rebuilding societies and repairing trust continues to fall disproportionately to women. Including women, especially those active in civil society, in official peacemaking efforts can help bridge this gap, as peace talks in Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Tunisia have shown. M.H., from Women of the Sun, put it best when she said to one of us: "It's time to invest in peace as much as we invest in war."

“Regardless of whether an agreement on a ceasefire and hostage release is concluded or remains stubbornly out of reach, the Biden administration should commit to including women in all future US-mediated talks.”

held a mass demonstration to demand an end to the cycle of bloodshed mere days before October 7. Two of their founders were included in Time magazine's 2024 women of the year, and their work has earned them a joint nomination for the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize and an endorsement from the Pope. Still, the Gaza war had been raging for eight months before US officials invited either organization to give a briefing on their shared Mothers' Call declaration, which supports a political solution to the conflict and women's inclusion in peace talks.

These peace activists have built momentum. On May 29, Palestinian organizations that have

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As Disinformation Thrives, Democracy Dies



Nishant Lalwani, Maha Taki, and James Deane

Nishant Lalwani is Co-Founder and CEO of the International Fund for Public Interest Media.

Maha Taki is Director of the What Works Unit at the International Fund for Public Interest Media.

James Deane is Co-Founder of the International Fund for Public Interest Media.

Last year, OECD countries collectively allocated more than \$220 billion in official development assistance (ODA). But a rising tide of disinformation is undermining the effectiveness of these investments.

For example, a massive increase in financing for climate adaptation is urgently needed, but the impact of calls for increased investment would likely be limited if disinformation campaigns persuade people that global warming doesn't exist or is not worth addressing. As COVID-19 showed, pandemic responses can be undermined if people fall victim to misleading health advice. And without a free and independent press to hold politicians and policymakers to account, famines become more likely, because increasingly scarce resources such as water and arable land may be poorly managed in the absence of transparent and equitable governance.

More worryingly, disinformation threatens not only development, but also democracy itself. As news organizations struggle to survive in a complex and fast-changing media landscape, abuses of political and corporate power go unchecked. Independent journalism is one of the cheapest and most efficacious bulwarks against authoritarianism. In fact, it is so effective that autocrats are spending billions of dollars each year to undermine it by influencing domestic and foreign media narratives, as Freedom House's report on China's global media influence shows.

And yet, while autocratic regimes invest billions in disinformation, Western countries are doing little to address the problem. To be sure, policymakers and politicians emphasize the vital role of press freedom in speeches, disinformation reports, and democracy conferences. But global government investment in public-interest journalism remains shockingly low.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recently published a landmark report that underscores this "mismatch between rhetoric and resource allocation." A detailed mapping study of ODA for media found that donor countries have not allocated enough resources to respond adequately to the dramatic erosion of information integrity worldwide.

Over the last decade, the percentage of the global population living under autocratic rule has risen, from 49% to 70%, disinformation has surged in every country, and the financial threats confronting independent media have become existential. But support for media has remained stagnant, with 38 OECD countries spending a total of around \$500 million per year – or about a third of Russia's estimated propaganda budget. This represents less than



0.2% of total ODA in 2022 (the most recent year for which statistics are available).

Worse, only a small fraction of this support is directly channeled to independent media organizations in recipient countries. The report finds that less than 10% of ODA for media and the information environment is delivered to journalists, media outlets, and civil-society organizations focused on journalism. This represents a mere 0.05% of total ODA between 2016 and 2022. Unless ODA for journalism is significantly increased, public-interest media in many countries will die out, with dire consequences for the societies served by these outlets. Democratic processes will be

This suggests that the low levels of spending on independent journalism do not reflect a lack of knowledge or evidence. Rather, donor countries consider this type of support to be politically challenging and difficult to execute – and rightly so. Investment in independent media can complicate government-to-government relationships. Moreover, even large donor countries are unable to invest in the staff required to support media organizations effectively as part of their bilateral ODA support to countries.

In addition, preserving the editorial independence of media outlets remains essential. While the amount of ODA going

Equally important are the other global, regional, and local organizations that help strengthen the capacity of independent media, advocate for press freedom, and push for regulatory reform. The International Fund was set up to work in synergy with these entities.

All of these initiatives are ready to scale up their support. But they need more resources. They must also work together to make media support a more central part of political discussions related to foreign policy and international development. Working together, we can urge government decision-makers who have leverage over ODA spending to increase support for this critically important area. This can be achieved by amplifying constructive voices and broadening the coalition of actors supporting independent media, particularly by connecting journalism's plight to other high-profile problems such as disinformation and corruption.

Looking ahead, artificial intelligence will fundamentally alter the information ecosystem, making investment in journalism even more critical. With enough funding, independent news outlets will be able to develop the tools and the capacity to deploy new technologies in the service of the public interest, rather than being left behind – as they were after the rise of social media. If OECD donor countries increased their support for media from 0.2% to 1% of total ODA – a relatively small increase, given the scale of the challenge – more than \$2 billion would be available for the sector globally.

Western countries have been lamenting the crisis in independent media for over a decade now. But foreign-aid spending on journalism has remained flat over that period.

The world has changed drastically in the last ten years, and a shift in donor strategy is long overdue. Now is the time to save independent journalism. The longer we let disinformation thrive, the less likely it will be that democracy survives.

“ Less than 10 percent of ODA for media and the information environment is delivered to journalists, media outlets, and civil-society organizations focused on journalism. This is a mere 0.05 percent of total ODA between 2016 and 2022. ”

destabilized, and progress on development will be stunted – perhaps irrevocably so.

Fortunately, some donor countries have finally begun to recognize this need. In March, the OECD DAC published a new set of principles for providing relevant and effective support to media and the information environment, which call for increasing financial and other forms of support, and strengthening local leadership and ownership. This means “ensuring a more significant share of ODA for media development reaches local and regional actors directly” and “increasing the availability and accessibility of direct, flexible, and reliable support, including core funding and longer-term, multi-year funding.”

directly to media organizations is unacceptably low, it would also be inappropriate for donor countries to increase direct support themselves – no government should be picking and choosing which news outlets are worthy of support.

Our organization, the International Fund for Public Interest Media (which financially supported the OECD DAC study but played no role in data collection or analysis), was created to address these challenges. As a multilateral fund that pools contributions from a large and diverse group of donors, it is designed to channel funding to media outlets quickly and at scale, without compromising the editorial independence of the newsrooms it supports.



Middle East Peace and the US Election



Bruce Ackerman

Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale University, is the author of Revolutionary Constitutions: Charismatic Leadership and the Rule of Law, which includes a chapter devoted to Iranian political development during the past century.

Following his near-death experience, Donald Trump chose a running mate who takes ideas seriously. To be sure, J.D. Vance has adopted a host of different positions over his short career, even attacking Trump before becoming his attack dog. The Democrats will naturally make the most of these inconsistencies, and Republicans will predictably counter with partisan blasts against Vice President Kamala Harris for her failure to guide a stuttering President Joe Biden down the right path.

But both sides will confront their 'moments of truth' when forced to clarify their positions on America's biggest foreign-policy challenges. This will become apparent when Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu addresses a joint session of Congress on July 24. Although Vance differs from Trump on other matters, both are strong supporters of Netanyahu's hardline stance, particularly his insistence that Israel must continue its war against Hamas until the group has been eliminated.

Biden and Harris will have a tough time responding to Netanyahu's speech without their party paying a political price at the polls. While Trump will attract some fragment of the Jewish community that typically votes Democratic, Gallup polls show that millions more Americans, especially Muslims, but also many Jews, oppose Netanyahu's hardline stance. Yet many within this cohort are appalled by the Biden administration's own failure to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza. Though they will not vote for Trump, they may abstain from voting at all, which could make all the difference in swing states.

But the new Iranian president, Masoud

“

Many are appalled by the Biden administration's own failure to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza. Though they will not vote for Trump, they may abstain from voting at all, which could make all the difference in swing states.

”

Pezeshkian, could also make a decisive difference in moving these alienated voters back into the Democratic column. Pezeshkian, elected following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May, is very different from his ultra-religious predecessor. Instead of seeking divine inspiration, he went to medical school and was so outstanding that he served a five-year term as president of the University of Medical Sciences in Tabriz. Between 2001 and 2005, he served as the health minister in the national government before turning to electoral politics and serving as parliament's first deputy speaker from 2016 to 2020.



Few leaders anywhere have combined such distinguished careers in academics, public service, and electoral politics. Before his name could appear on the ballot, however, his candidacy had to be approved by the Council of Guardians, dominated by Iran's religious elite, which has the exclusive constitutional authority to approve candidates' qualifications.

Over the past 40 years, the Council has exercised its prerogative in very different ways, often permitting secularists to run for office. But in 2020, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, used his authority over the Guardians to ensure that Raisi, along with five other religious extremists, monopolized the ballot, making it impossible for voters to take a different path.

This was hardly surprising, since Khamenei was 81 in 2020 and wanted to be certain that the next president would use his influence to guarantee that the next Supreme Leader would continue to embrace his own ultra-orthodox principles. Raisi's tragic accident, moreover, led Khamenei, now 85 and near the end of his life, to address the nation on the overriding importance of selecting a super-religious successor who would follow in his footsteps. Against this background, Pezeshkian seemed to have absolutely no chance of gaining a place on the ballot.

But times had changed in the three years since the Guardians' exclusionary decisions helped the extremist Raisi win the presidency. The turning point came in 2022, when a young woman, Mahsa Amini, died in police custody after being detained for failing to wear a headscarf in public. The government responded to massive protests throughout the country by killing hundreds of demonstrators. Although the protests waned over the course of 2024, Raisi's sudden death led the insurgents to threaten the Guardians that they would propel the country to the brink of civil war if religious extremists once again monopolized the ballot. Faced with this grim prospect, the Guardians gave in and permitted Pezeshkian to run against five leading followers of Khamenei.

Iranians responded to this opportunity by giving the 69-year-old Pezeshkian a decisive victory, by more than three million votes, over his most formidable religious opponent. Since his triumph, Pezeshkian has been careful to interpret his electoral mandate in a sophisticated fashion. He has made it clear that, upon Khamenei's death, he has absolutely no intention of promoting a secularist like himself to serve as Supreme Leader. Instead, he has simply emphasized that the constitution recognizes that all Iranians have 'the exalted dignity' to determine the meaning of their own lives, implying that he will support the selection of any Supreme Leader who, in contrast to Raisi, pledges to uphold this provision.

Even more important for present purposes, he has also issued a remarkable 'Message to the New World', published in English in the Tehran Times. In it, Pezeshkian declares that he will

"welcome sincere efforts to alleviate tensions and will reciprocate good-faith with good-faith." That suggests a willingness to reduce the threat of nuclear war by opening up Iran's nuclear facilities for international inspection in exchange for the US reopening its markets to Iran's producers and consumers.

This offer is precisely what the Biden administration needs to frame a credible response to Netanyahu's address to Congress. In contrast to the cheers that Americans will hear from Trump and Vance, Secretary of State Antony Blinken will be in a position to announce a new approach to peace in the Middle East.

To be sure, Biden and Harris should not express great confidence that preliminary

negotiations with Pezeshkian will ultimately lead to an accord that will radically reduce the escalating risk of nuclear war between Israel and Iran. That can happen only if the Harris team manages to win the election in November, and Pezeshkian manages to overcome the resistance of his ultra-religious opponents.

Nevertheless, does it not make sense for Americans to give the administration a chance to achieve this breakthrough, rather than allowing Trump and Vance to squander this opportunity? Harris should put this question to voters. But they will be able to do so only if Blinken immediately reaches out to Iran and joins Pezeshkian in announcing that their countries will be exploring a new path to peace in the Middle East.

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RECIPE

Bottle-Gourd Halwa



Bottle Gourd Halwa is a popular dessert in India and elsewhere during the summer. It is a simple and 'easy-to-make' recipe that can be prepared for any occasion in less than half-an-hour.

Total time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4 people

Ingredients:

- 2 cups grated bottle-gourd
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup khoya (reduced milk solids)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp chopped nuts
- 1 tbsp raisin
- 3 tbsp ghee (clarified butter)
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- A pinch green food color (optional)
- 1 tsp rose water

Instructions:

- Peel the outer skin and grate the bottle gourd
- Heat the ghee in a pan and lightly fry the chopped nuts; set aside
- Place the grated bottle-gourd in a pan and saute on medium flame for 2 minutes
- Continue cooking the gourd until all the moisture evaporates
- Add milk to the bottle gourd along with green food color and cook once again until all the moisture evaporates.
- Add the sugar and cook till the mixture starts to leave the sides of the pan
- When mixture thickens, add rose water, cardamom powder, and fried-nuts
- Mix well, garnish, and serve hot or cold.



Chef Chhaya Thakker



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

Thought
for the
week

“It's easy to stand with the crowd, but it takes courage to stand alone.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

Over 400 Arab athletes eye medals at Paris Olympics

Some 429 Arab athletes are partaking in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, which kick-started on Friday, vying to add more medals to their countries.

During their previous Olympic competitions over 100 years, Arab athletes snatched 129 varied medals. They had won 32 gold, 33 silver and 64 bronze, and took in the 1912 Stockholm Olympic games for the first time through Egypt's athlete Ahmad Hasaneen.

Egypt came first in terms of medals at these games, collecting 38: Eight gold, 11 silver and 19 bronze followed by Morocco with seven gold, five silver and 12 bronze. Algeria came after Morocco, obtaining five gold, four silver and eight bronze, followed by Tunisia which won five gold, three silver and seven bronze. Qatar, Bahrain, Syria, Jordan and the UAE won the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth positions respectively.

Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Sudan, Kuwait, Iraq and Djibouti were in the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th positions respectively. Athletes of the remaining Arab countries are searching for the first medal in Olympic Games. Egypt was the first Arab country that snatched Olympic medals in 1928 in Amsterdam when Sayed Nusair won the gold of Weightlifting, and his compatriots Ibrahim Moustafa had the gold at Men's Greco-Roman light heavyweight wrestling, while Farid Simaika obtained the diving silver medal at Men's 10 m platform and the diving bronze at Men's 3 m springboard.

Arab countries did not partake in the 1932 games, but Egypt took part in Berlin games in 1936. Due to World War II, the 1940 and 1944 games were suspended, and the competition was organized again in the 1948 London games when Iraq, Syria and Lebanon joined the tourney. Lebanon took part in the Olympics for the first in 1952 Helsinki Summer Olympics, winning three medals: One silver and two bronze.

The 1960 Rome games featured Morocco, Sudan and



Tunisia for the first time, in addition to Lebanon, Iraq and the United Arab Republic - Egypt and Syria. Algeria was among the participating teams for the first time at the 1964 Tokyo games, in addition to 10 Arab countries, including Kuwait.

Only three Arab countries - Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabs - took part in 1976 Montreal games, gaining no medals. Seven Arab athletes participated in the 1980 Moscow games and had only a bronze, while 19 Arab countries joined Los Angeles games in 1984, obtaining two gold, two silver and two bronze medals through Egypt, Algeria and Morocco.

The 1988 Seoul Olympics featured 21 Arab countries. In the 1992 Barcelona competitions, Algeria's runner Hassiba Boulmerka won the first gold medal for her country in 1500-m race.

The 1996 Atlantic games featured 22 Arab countries, and Palestine and Comoros were among the participating teams for the first time. In 2000 Sydney games, Arabs had 14 medals, 10 in the 2004 Athens competitions, seven in Beijing in 2008 and 12 in the 2012 London Olympic games.

In Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games, Arabs won two gold, four silver and eight bronze accolades, while they snatched 18 - five gold, four silver and nine bronze - in Tokyo in 2020.

Kuwaitis urged to throw weight behind compatriots at Paris Olympics

Minister of State for Youth Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila appealed to Kuwaitis to cheer on their compatriots during the 2024

Summer Olympic Games, to kick-start later on Friday in the French capital Paris. Leading the Kuwaiti delegation, Al-Huwaila, also Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, made the statement. The Kuwait Olympic Committee is partaking in this global event with nine male and female athletes in a number of contests, including swimming, rowing, fencing, sailing and shooting, she pointed out.

Praising Kuwait's participation in the global tournament, which continues until August 11, Al-Huwaila underlined the resolve of Kuwaiti athletes.

The State of Kuwait took part in the Olympic Games 14 times, starting with Mexico in 1968, while 1980 Moscow Olympics saw the participation of 56 athletes; the highest in Kuwait's history so far. Athens 2004 witnessed Kuwaiti females' participation for the first time.



Kuwaiti rowing champion Al-Faqaan ranks 4th in the preliminary heats

Kuwaiti rowing champion Soaad Al-Faqaan completed on Saturday the initial preliminary qualifiers by placing fourth in the (women's solo) race at Paris Olympic Games 2024.

Al-Faqaan will have a second chance to qualify for the next round of competitions during the rehabilitation round for players from fourth to sixth place in the individual qualifiers scheduled for Sunday.

Al-Faqaan recorded a time of 8.16.32 minutes in the qualifying rounds, which was topped by American player Kara Koehler, who's recorded a time of 7.32.46 minutes. The rowing competitions were held on the Vaires-sur-Marne in the Seine-et-Marne region, north of Paris.

Soad Al-Faqaan's participation in marine sports is considered the first participation of Kuwaiti women at the Olympic Games. Meanwhile, Kuwait is participating in the Paris Olympics Games 2024 with nine play competing in six games: archery, fencing, swimming, athletics, rowing, and sailing.



Stresslaxing: When de-stressing causes stress

Doctors point out that depression and anxiety, as well as social, relational and interpersonal difficulties can surge among people who cannot find time to relax and unwind. The state of being in a state of constant alertness causes the nervous system to become over-stimulated, which makes it difficult to elicit a relaxation response in such people.

Stress, which is the experience of feeling mentally tense or worried about a situation, is a basic survival instinct honed over the millennia of human evolution. It is the body's natural response to address actual or potential threats and challenges that confront us.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the response to stressful situations could include, among others, feelings of anxiety or irritability; finding it difficult to concentrate, eat or sleep; or experiencing physical discomforts such as headaches, or an upset stomach. Chronic stress has been also shown to worsen pre-existing health problems and lead to, or increase, substance abuse.

Stress can also exacerbate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, and, if left unaddressed, can affect our ability to function normally. Pressures of modern life means that everyone today experiences some form of physiological or psychological stress in their life. While a little bit of stress is good and can help us better perform daily activities, too much stress can be detrimental to our health and well-being. Recognizing that you are stressed and need to relax is the first step to learning how to cope with this condition.

But, if trying to relax makes you feel even more stressed, then you may be experiencing what is commonly termed as 'stresslaxing', and clinically referred to as 'relaxation induced stress'. Psychologists use this term to describe the counterproductive experience of people, who are already stressed by anxiety or depression, when they force themselves to relax and 'de-stress'.

Over the process of evolution, the human brain, in particular, the amygdala portion of the brain — which is always on the lookout for potential threats to our safety — has developed to be always 'on' and primed to resist any forced relaxation. Studies show that people who live with anxiety, worry, and tend to overthink about situations, often have difficulties with cognitive

control, meaning they find it hard to put certain thoughts 'on hold'.

Mental health experts opine that besides internal body dynamics that lead people to feel 'stresslaxed', there could also be external pressures, such as work, study, family, or other commitments that make it difficult for people to relax. These people feel they need to be constantly 'switched on' and alert to the outside world, as they subconsciously believe that spending time on relaxing and unwinding can lead to 'missing-out' on opportunities.

Sociologists point out that the 'stresslaxing' phenomena is increasingly evident in today's world, where boundaries of work and leisure have merged. This is especially so among people who engage in 'work-at-home' routines, where they are often on alert all the time so as to avoid missing a call, message or video link from the office.

Interestingly, there are also people who become 'stresslaxed' due to feeling they need to remain engaged on social media 24x7, so as not to miss-out on the latest digital message, clip or gossip, irrespective of whether it is work or leisure time. This constant engagement and the feeling they cannot afford to relax, not only leads to lower productivity and increased anxiety or depression, it also leaves people in a state of chronic stress.

Besides psychological risks, chronic stress caused by not being able to relax can also lead to, or increase, physiological conditions such as high blood pressure, which raises the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Inability to de-stress can also increase fatigue, ulcers, headaches, backaches, difficulty in concentrating, and irritability.

Doctors point out that depression and anxiety, as well as social, relational and interpersonal difficulties can surge among people who cannot find time to relax and unwind. The state of being in a state of constant alertness causes the nervous system to become



over-stimulated, which makes it difficult to elicit a relaxation response in such people.

Appropriate and intentional relaxation practices are then needed to reset the nervous system to its default state. Intentional relaxation counteracts the negative effects of stress and returns our nervous system to a homeostatic balance. The relaxation process can be triggered through visualization, muscle relaxation, massage, breathing techniques, meditation, prayer, and yoga.

However, before engaging in such practices it is important to understand that relaxation is not a passive activity and that it does not come naturally to everyone. There is also a misconception among many people that relaxation equates to 'zoning out'. While appearing to be similar, they are two different conditions of the mind. Zoning out is the state of not being aware of what is said or done

before a person for a period of time.

While 'zoning out' certainly gives our brain a break, it does not achieve the real goal of relaxation, which is to 'downshift' our nervous system. This downshifting is an active process designed to elicit the 'relaxation response', which is the physiological opposite of the fight-or-flight response.

Below are some of the tactics that could get the relaxation process in motion

- Set boundaries between work and home life
- Switch off digital devices early each night
- Make self-care a priority.
- Learn how to live in the moment. Begin by sitting in a comfortable position, closing your eyes, intentionally relaxing all the muscles, beginning at your feet and working up to your head, breathing slowly, for 20 minutes.
- Focus on a 'done' list rather than a 'to-do list', so you can recall what you have already accomplished. The traditional 'to-do' list leads to thinking about the future, which prevents you from being in the present. The 'done' list brings you to the present, it celebrates what targets have been achieved and encourages relaxation.
- Engage in five-minute meditation. Studies show that even five minutes of deep breathing, silence, and restfulness can enhance mental and physical functioning..
- Feed your senses and ground yourself in the moment by using the '5,4,3,2,1 Technique', which helps you relax more readily by reducing anxiety. Find five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste, while breathing slowly and deeply.

Chemotherapy disrupts gut biome, increases cognitive decline

Chemotherapy is a standard clinical regimen that is most often used to treat cancer patients. It uses powerful chemicals to stop the growth or proliferation of cancer cells in the body, and is usually administered after a procedure to remove the cancerous growth. Many cancer patients dread chemotherapy due to the powerful drugs used in the medication, which can cause both physical and psychological side effects, including cognitive decline.

New studies by researchers at the Ohio State University show that chemotherapy also has a negative impact on the gut microbiome — the billions of microorganisms that reside in our intestinal tract of humans and other animals. The microbiota affect each other and their environment in various ways, and also influence many aspects of our overall health.

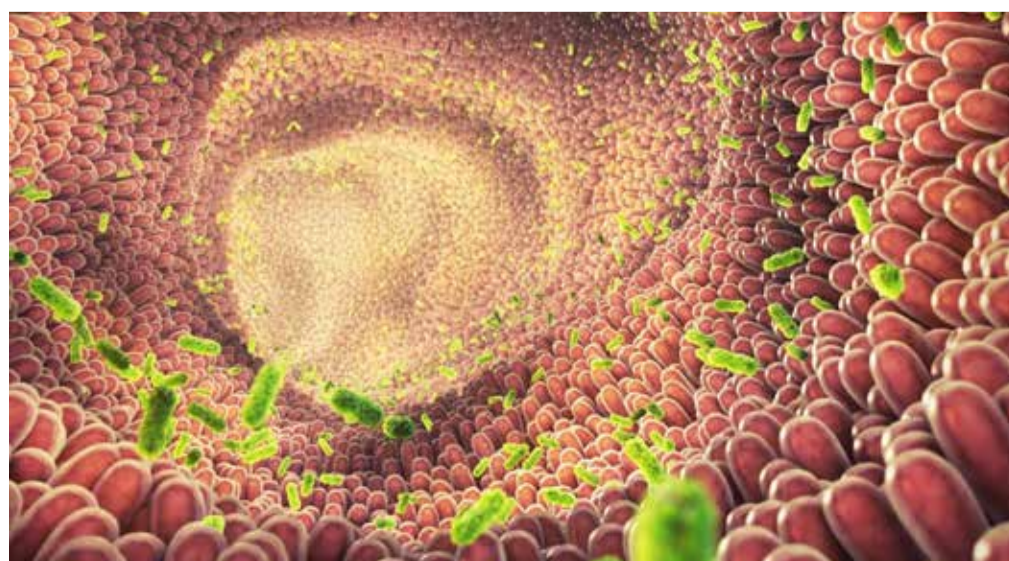
The new study found that the gut flora even communicates with the brain to affect behavioral changes, including cognition in humans. The university's 'Intelligut Study' conducted by the researchers found that the gut microbiome was involved in precipitating cognitive side-effects on undergoing chemotherapy. The discovery of a potential connection between the gut and

cognitive outcomes could pave the way for developing treatments that target the gut to treat the brain.

The clinical longitudinal observational 'intelligut' study explored whether chemotherapy-induced disruption of the gut microbiome relates to cognitive decline and

circulating inflammatory signals. Fecal samples, blood and cognitive measures were collected from 77 patients with breast cancer before, during and after chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy was found to induce microbiome disruption that related to cognitive decline and inflammation among the patients.



Those cognitively impaired were found to have unique chemotherapy-induced microbiome alterations, including a significant reduction in the diversity of their gut microbiome.

The new research was based on prior research at the university on mouse models, which found that shifts in the gut microbiome due to chemotherapy, induced neurobiological changes and behavioral side effects in mice. The current study indicated that an association between gut microbiome and cognitive performance exists in humans as well.

"Chemotherapy is a very important tool for stopping many cancers and side effects should not deter patients who would benefit from this type of therapy from pursuing it. But through our new study we now know that the side-effects of some treatment regimens can induce cognitive decline that could be challenging for patients to overcome," said the researchers. The research team is now reportedly conducting studies on how the gut microbiome impacts cancer treatment effectiveness and its role in reducing or increasing cancer risk, as well as on developing ways to manage the side effects of disease treatment with a focus on the quality of life for patients.

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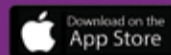
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