

Local

COVID-19 drastically changed people's lifestyles, but not always negatively

By Nawara Fattahova

The pandemic has persisted for much longer than we expected when it first reached Kuwait. Everybody thought it's a matter of a few weeks and then it'll be over, but the coronavirus is among us till today. It's been more than 10 months since the first case was discovered in Kuwait, with the spread of COVID-19 completely changing our lives. The pandemic has been a disaster for some people, a negative change for most people, but also a positive change for others.

Fatma's life has changed a lot due to the pandemic - for the better. "I worked at a company and was very busy with my work and career. I have lost my job now, in the sense that this business sector hasn't started operating yet and most probably I won't return. So I started my own small business, and now I'm focusing on my health and family much more. I'm spending more quality time with my family and am enjoying this lifestyle much more," Fatma told Kuwait Times.

Fatma has also cut her expenses. "I was spending much more before the pandemic. I was living in a four-bedroom apartment - now I've moved to a smaller apartment, but I'm happy. At the beginning of the pandemic, I was stuck abroad and I had to stay for over two months there. I lived in a one-bedroom apartment with my family, yet it was one of the happiest moments of my life," she added.

Ahmad believes the pandemic has made his life healthier. "The lockdown brought about changes in my lifestyle, which became more healthy. As people tend to eat more and move less, this results in gaining weight, so I started eating more healthy and diet food. Also, I am now going to the gym six days a week from twice a week before the pandemic. The other critical change in my life was not travelling, something that I'm used to doing every year. As soon as the situation gets better, I will travel," he vowed.

Ghanima lost her job during the pandemic, but does not regret it. "I wasn't very happy in my job anyways. But my routine changed completely. In the beginning, I was depressed over sitting all the time at home with my husband and kids. The daily routine got messed up - there was no exact time for going to bed and waking up, and even for meals. Also, my husband had to close his shop during the lockdown, but now he is working, so part of our normal life is back," she said.

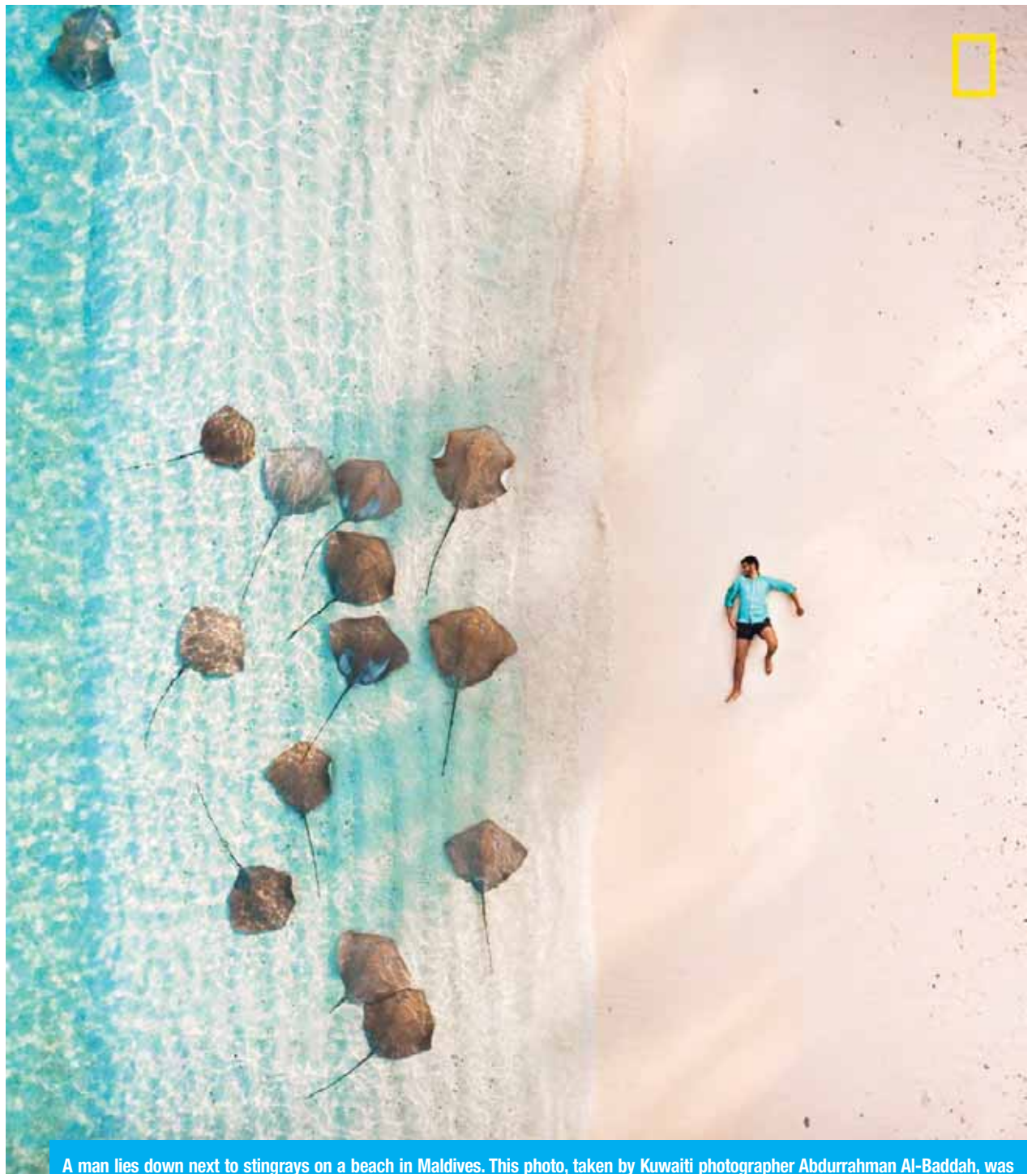
Ghanima learnt new things too. "Due to the long closure of beauty salons, I had to dye my hair myself, which I used to do at the salon. Salons are now open again, but I still dye my hair at home," she added.

For Abu Abdullah, there have been two major changes during the pandemic. "I couldn't travel and participate in tournaments around the world as I usually do every year. An unhealthy diet and lack of exercise also caused a rise in my blood sugar levels. I also should have learnt how to be frugal with my money and take extra care of my health, but I didn't. I see people getting back to normal habits and not following increased precautions regarding hygiene, like not bringing their own prayer mats to the mosque," he explained.

The pandemic was positive for Sahar. "My life was much better during the lockdown. I had more time to spend with my baby while working from home - it was a privilege that I never imagined. I spent more time with my husband and learned how to cook. And as the bank stopped cutting installments, I was receiving my whole salary and had more money to buy the things that I needed. Nothing from my habits changed - since I was pregnant and delivered right before the pandemic, life had already changed," she stated.

Marilyn has adopted a few habits that have become an essential part of her life. "Wearing a facemask is now an automatic ritual when I step out of the house. If I leave without it, I immediately go back to take it. Also, I go straight to wash my hands as soon as I reach home. I have stopped going to shopping malls almost completely, and am keen to avoid crowds and gatherings," she said.

For Noora, the pandemic and 2020 in general was a whole year of depression and isolation. "I lost my frequent habit of travelling - it's been more than a year since I travelled. I lost all social activities that I used to attend during the year, including exhibitions, weddings, plays, cinema and so on. I also don't kiss friends when we meet, which is common in our community. I think this habit may continue even after the pandemic is over," she rued.



A man lies down next to stingrays on a beach in Maldives. This photo, taken by Kuwaiti photographer Abdurrahman Al-Baddah, was recently featured in National Geographic Arabia Magazine.