

Local

Planting requires concerted efforts, says Kuwait's agriculture authority

Kuwait plans to plant more Sidra trees instead of palms

KUWAIT: Unquestionably, tree-planting has become a national and international prerequisite that necessitates the concerted efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Middle East Green Initiative and the recently held climate change conference, known as COP26, came to serve the ultimate goal of coordinating action to boost green areas worldwide and stop the rise in global temperatures. The Middle East Green Initiative was launched in March with a view to growing 50 billion trees and boosting forests in the Middle East region. The impor-



**Increasing
countrywide
green coverage**

tance of reversing the effects of climate change is tangible across the Middle East and North Africa, where the impact of rising temperatures is already affecting livelihoods and opportunities. The initiative is mainly meant to plant 50 billion trees across the Middle East (including 10 billion at home in Saudi Arabia), through afforestation, restore an area equivalent to 200 million hectares of degraded land reducing 2.5 percent of global carbon levels, and contribute to reducing carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by more than 60 percent.

The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October-13 November 2021, bringing parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of

the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The main goals of the COP26 are to secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach and adapt to protect communities and natural habitats. These events, together with previous gatherings, came up with a slew of concrete and effective commitments to increasing afforestation, nature reserves, parks, planting and environmental rehabilitation.

In this context, Kuwait's Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) underlined that it is necessary to grow new types of plants and trees in Kuwait in a bid to ease its hot weather conditions. Therefore, it said in a press release, that it is trying hard to plant the Sidra tree, also known

Ziziphus spina-christi tree or the Christ's thorn jujube, along highways, main roads and residential and desert areas. Unlike palm trees, the Sidra tree is an evergreen shrub or tree that withstands scorching heat, thrives in the harshest environments and consumes little water, the authority said.

From now on, palm trees would only be planted in houses and farms, rather than along roads or at public parks, the authority underlined, pointing out a plan to grow Sidra trees at nature reserves. It added that contracts pertinent to public parks have been unprecedentedly separated from those bearing on roads and streets in a bid to stave off looming negative impacts on tree-growing projects nationwide. Some 39 old parks have already been rehabilitated on

the basis of this fledging separation mechanism which has been put in place for the first time since the authority was established, according to the release.

Furthermore, the authority has created a total of 64 athletic courts and 48 kids play areas as part of its endeavors to reduce buildings and boost afforestation nationwide. All these efforts, together with planting awareness campaigns, are primarily intended to increase countrywide green coverage with a view to providing more oxygen, breaking visual pollution and cutting surging temperatures, it noted. Finally, the authority emphasized that it is committed to throwing much weight behind all initiatives and campaigns by individuals and civil society organizations, along with the private sector, to increase green areas in all governorates. — KUNA

Kuwaiti official stresses Manama Dialogue's importance

MANAMA: Acting Head of the Kuwaiti National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Sabah Shamlan Abdulaziz Al-Sabah stressed yesterday the importance of the 17th Regional Security Forum - Manama Dialogue hosted by Bahrain with the participation of security service chiefs, political and economic figures. He said on the sidelines of his participation that the conference's agenda for this year reflects the importance of the work undertaken by Bahrain to discuss the issues between officials in the security, defense, political and Middle Eastern fields. He added that among the most prominent issues are the American policy to defend the Gulf region and Gulf relationship with Asian countries, regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction weapons as well as regional and international issues. Sheikh Sabah expressed his appreciation to Bahrain for hosting this conference, which has proved successful over the past 17 years by raising important issues related to regional and international security.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had stressed during the same conference the importance of strengthening cooperation with the partners in the



MANAMA: Acting Head of the Kuwaiti National Security Apparatus Sheikh Sabah Shamlan Abdulaziz Al-Sabah attends the forum. — KUNA

Middle East to address "security challenges" in the region. Austin said that the US would work to strengthen investments in this region, modernize relations with partners, and expand the basis of integrated deterrence against the challenges of the twenty-first century. He affirmed his country's commitment to strengthening the security of the region, indicating that this is among the priorities of his country. Moreover, he said that weapons alone could not give the world the security it wants, while diplomacy is the solution for most conflicts. — KUNA

Indian envoy visits Kuwait's naval base

KUWAIT: Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George visited Muhammad Al-Ahmad Kuwait Naval Base recently and met Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Brigadier General Hazza Mutlaq Al-Alati. Both sides reviewed the ongoing cooperation between the two countries and ways of furthering deepening the engagement including in maritime areas. They also discussed the joint fight against COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador George thanked the leadership for the logistical and other support during the visit of Indian Naval Ships in June 2021 as part of the sea/air bridge set up for supply of medical oxygen to India during the pandemic. India and Kuwait share a strong maritime connect spanning over centuries. Both Navies are in close contact for further upgrading their bilateral relationship.



KUWAIT: Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George meets Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Brigadier General Hazza Mutlaq Al-Alati.

World's first electric cargo...

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its 7.5-nautical-mile trips on its own with the aid of sensors. "Quite a lot of the incidents happening on vessels are due to human error, because of fatigue for instance," project manager Jostein Braaten said from the possibly doomed bridge.

"Autonomous operating can enable a safe journey," he said. While the distance the Yara Birkeland will cover may be short, it will face many obstacles. It will have to navigate in a narrow fjord, and sail under two bridges while managing currents and heavy traffic from merchant ships, pleasure craft and kayaks, before docking at one of Norway's busiest ports. The next few months will be a learning period.

"First of all, we have to detect that there's something there. We have to understand that it's a kayak, then we have to determine what to do with that," said Braaten. "Currently, large vessels don't do much with a kayak. They can't do much. They can warn, but they cannot manoeuvre away" or reverse to avoid an incident. Autonomous navigation will require a new set of regulations that do not exist yet.

On board the Yara Birkeland, the traditional machine room has been replaced by eight battery compartments, giving the vessel a capacity of 6.8 MWh -

sourced from renewable hydroelectricity. "That's the equivalent of 100 Teslas," says Braaten. The maritime sector, which is responsible for almost three percent of all man-made emissions, aims to reduce its emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050.

Despite that, the sector has seen a rise in recent years. International and domestic shipping and fishing combined, the industry emitted more than one billion tons of greenhouse gases in 2018, up from 962 million tons in 2012, according to the latest figures from the International Maritime Organization.

By itself, the Yara Birkeland's contribution to global climate efforts will be just a drop in the ocean - eliminating 678 tons of carbon dioxide per year churned out by the redundant trucks. And experts don't expect electric vessels to become a universal solution for the industry any time soon. "Electricity has a niche" use, in particular for ferries as these are often short and stable routes, possibly on coastal and river transports. But it's not well-adapted for long ocean crossings," said Camille Egloff, a maritime transport expert at Boston Consulting Group.

"Not only would (a vessel) need to be autonomous for long distances but you would also have to equip ports with battery chargers. So there are technical and infrastructure challenges that would need to be coordinated," she said. While dozens of electric ferries already criss-cross the fjords of Norway - a major oil and gas producer which is paradoxically also a leader in electric transport - ocean liners will have to rely on other technologies to go green, such as LNG, e-methanol and hydrogen. — AFP

US unwavering in Mideast security...

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resuming a nuclear deal which has been stalled since 2018, when former US president Donald

Chronic diseases linked to meat...

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The study suggests that to achieve healthier and more sustainable diets, international dialogue should

Trump walked away. On Friday, US special envoy Robert Malley told the conference that time was running out to return to the deal if Iran continues to make "advances" in its nuclear program.

"We remain committed to a diplomatic outcome of the nuclear issue," Austin said. "But if Iran is not willing to engage seriously, then we will look at all the options necessary to keep them the United States secure." Iran's Gulf neighbors are concerned that concessions could be made to the Islamic republic in the nuclear talks. — AFP

involve both health and trade bodies, citing the World Trade Organization (WTO). "Regional trade agreements of the WTO accelerate red and processed meat flows among countries," it said, and suggested it could coordinate with UN health and food agencies to improve future trade policy. Since it is observational, the study can suggest but not confirm the cause-effect relationship between meat trade and diet-related illnesses. — AFP

packages that cost thousands of dollars for a single group game. Qatar has earmarked 3.9 billion riyals (\$1.07 billion) in the 2021 budget for drainage and estuaries, compared to 3.2 billion riyals for highways. "Development of drainage stations, water treatment plants, pumping and rainwater drainage networks in several regions to prevent flooding due to rain" are a priority in 2021, the Public Budget Statement said.

Qatar has spent billions of dollars on a new metro system that is used so far mainly by migrant workers from South Asia and the Philippines, with wealthier expatriates and Qataris sticking to large SUVs and luxury cars. Ashghal, the body in charge of public works, gave assurances that the main routes will be ready to link "the eight stadiums with a rapid road network that avoids any traffic jams for their users".

"These routes are also linked to metro and bus stations as well as commercial centers for World Cup fans," said Salem Al-Shawy, deputy director of roadworks at Ashghal. "We understand that drivers are suffering... but we want to make sure that this project will finish on time before the FIFA (World Cup)," he added. In the meantime, Uber driver Mohammed, who comes from Bangladesh and has been living in Qatar for 15 years, is doing his best to keep his passengers happy. — AFP

Biden declared healthy and 'fit'...

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eye health "is reassuring." One reason for that solid report may be the doctor's finding that "the president does not use any tobacco products, does not drink alcohol, and he works out at least five days a week."

Biden, who turned 79 yesterday and is the oldest president in US history, takes three common prescription medications and two over-the-counter medicines, as well as wearing contact lenses, the letter revealed. He measures five feet, 11.65 inches, weighs 184 pounds and has a body mass index of 25. A smiling Biden returned to the White House from his checkup at Walter Reed hospital earlier, saying "I feel great." "We're in great shape," he said, wearing his trademark avi-

ator sunglasses.

While the annual visit to Walter Reed hospital was routine for a president, the requirement for Biden to transfer power while sedated during a colonoscopy exam made history. For one hour and 25 minutes, Harris was the first woman to hold presidential power in the United States. She is already the first female vice president.

The White House press office said that official letters to Congress declaring the temporary transfer of power were sent at 10:10 am. "The president resumed his duties at 11:35 am," the White House said in a statement. "Today that was another chapter in that history for many women, young girls across the country," Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, noting Harris' trailblazing role.

Harris made an unsuccessful bid for the Democratic Party nomination in 2020, before being picked as Biden's running mate. While holding the temporary presidential reins she continued to "work from her office in the West Wing," Psaki said. — AFP

Qatar prepares to host...

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"Doha has become a building site, we're driving in the middle of roadworks. And this is going to go on right up to the World Cup" next November and December, said a young Qatari. Annual rainfall is only about 75 millimeters in the city but scenes of flooding are not unknown, with cars semi-submerged, tunnels blocked and residents enjoying impromptu watersports.

"Many of Doha's roads were built without proper drainage so whenever it rained it flooded," said a source briefed on the construction efforts. "They are now rushing to install drainage, even on roads that were finished." World Cup chiefs have boasted that because of Qatar's compact size, the longest journey between any two of the eight tournament stadiums in and around Doha would be under 45 minutes.

But gridlock would affect journey times, especially with the heavy influx of visitors - some on hospitality