

**CAPTAINS CORNER**

# How to future-proof our old age



**CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD**

I am often told that I tend to focus on children's upbringing and youth in my writings. That is possibly because they are the future generation and if we are to "future-proof" our lives, we need to grasp every opportunity to set right the innumerable wrongs we, the older gen, have inflicted upon the world.

That said, the Gen X-ers too have their own share of issues to manage and we are often so busy caring for either the older generation of our parents or the younger generation of our children, that we leave any long-term planning of our own future till the very last. Many of us justify this lack of planning as selflessness but the truth is that it shows a complete confusion about the 21st century.

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Consider these facts: going by current trends and health-care advances, most of us enjoy a natural lifespan that is at least 25 years more than our parents. And we live these years in relative good health physically. Alongside this longevity, we are faced with the challenged of managing the so-called 'lifestyle' ailments like diabetes and hypertension, joint stiffness because of too much sitting on desks. We need to balance the good fortune of our bonus years with the challenges of accompanying small setbacks and draw up a life-plan that will not make us a burden to our children.

Of course, in Bahrain, most of us have excellent free health cover and expats are mostly covered by their employers. That leaves us with the question of what we can do with our time. The idle mind is the devil's workshop and an idle older person can soon become a burden on his or her family or society. At the same time, the elderly are repositories of our heritage and our past and must be respected. In a fast-evolving society where the old joint family traditions have given way to nuclear units with husband and wife working, we have to find a meaningful role for our elderly if we are to avoid the pitfalls of care that other societies face when dealing with the aged. A proper care model will also assure us that we shall be well-cared for and can look forward to a meaningful and emotionally satisfying old age when it is our turn.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

## Combatting smoking and tobacco



Jalila bint Al-Sayed Jawad Hassan, the Minister of Health, yesterday stressed commitment to developing strategies to combat smoking and tobacco in the Kingdom. This came as she chaired a meeting of the National Committee to Combat Smoking and All Types and Products of Tobacco, which included representatives from various ministries and official authorities. The meeting addressed key issues on the committee's agenda and approved minutes from the previous session.



Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, Chairman of the Electricity and Water Authority, highlighted Bahrain's commitment to resource development and sustainability in securing its energy future, during his visit to Dubai. In a series of meetings with industry leaders, including Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Managing Director and CEO of the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, Raad Esmat Al-Saadi, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Saudi company ACWA Power, and Hashim Ghobashi, CEO of the Noor Energy Project, Mohammed discussed the importance of sustainable energy practices. He also visited the Shuaa Energy 3 project, which produces solar photovoltaic energy, and met with Omar Al Hassan, CEO of the company, to learn about the United Arab Emirates' experience in solar panel technology and reducing production costs.



**Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma'a**

## Bahrain to host GHEDEX 2023

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Bahrain will host the Global Higher Education Exhibition 2023 (GHEDEX 2023) at the Exhibition World Bahrain from May 6 to 8, said Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma'a, Education Minister.

Dr Juma'a, who is also the Chairman of the Higher Education Council, said the event will feature a broad range of local, regional, and international higher education establishments.

GHEDEX will also have several activities, including the technical education and vocational training exhibition, the international innovation and entrepreneurship conference, and GHEDEX prizes for excellence in higher education.

This marks the first time that GHEDEX will be held in Bahrain.

# Two men arrested in Tubli for robbery and assault

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Two men, aged 25 and 28, were arrested by the police yesterday for attacking and stealing from another person in Tubli.

The suspects, police said, who are both Asian nationals, are accused of forcefully stealing from a fellow



Representative picture

Asian national while he was walking in the neighbour-

hood. The General Department of Investigation and Criminal Evidence said they initiated an investigation immediately after receiving a call and identified the suspects using evidence from the crime scene and CCTV footage.

The department is now preparing to refer the case to Public Prosecution.

# Despite progress in education, women's entrepreneurship in MENA lags behind, says Wilson Centre report

**Julia Cassano**  
TDT | Manama

Women entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa is lagging behind, despite recording significant progress in education, according to a new report by the Wilson Centre.

The report on "Women and Entrepreneurship in MENA: The Cases of Bahrain, Lebanon and Tunisia" claims that only 23% of businesses in the region are owned by women, compared to 34% globally, and the average female business participation rate is only 19%, the lowest in the world.

The report reviews cases of Bahrain, Lebanon, and Tunisia, where the range of woman-owned businesses varies from 7% in Yemen to 49% in Tunisia.

Wilson Centre claims that despite women graduating at similar or higher



Lynn Mounzer



MaryClare Roche



Faisal Hammad

rates than men at the secondary and university levels in Bahrain, Lebanon, and Tunisia, their presence in the workforce are still low.

The lead researcher in the report, Lynn Mounzer, attributed this to the "outdated curricula, sociocultural factors, and a lack of focus on entrepreneurship for women in the region."

Mounzer also emphasised that legal protections for women in the private sector are critical for their advance-

ment. A notable achievement for all these countries is the significant progress in criminalising workplace harassment, the report highlights.

However, the lack of childcare remains a critical concern for both women and men, which could inhibit women from building a lasting career or business, stressed MaryClare Roche, technology director at the Arab Barometer.

"Although men recognise

the importance of childcare, they do not recognise the importance of childcare for women," Roche said, stressing that burdening women with multiple responsibilities, including household care, while operating a business could "inhibit them from building a lasting career or business."

Gender diversity is also lacking in venture capital (VC) organisations in the MENA region, where only 1% of the USD 3 billion venture capital funding towards

businesses went to women. In the report, Faisal Hammad, Chairman of the Equal Opportunity Committee at the Ministry of National Economy, stressed the importance of equal opportunity in promoting women's advancement and gender equality in the Bahraini workforce.

He notes that when women are allowed to enter leadership positions in small, medium, and big businesses, there is a significant spike in productivity and profitability.

To address these issues, the report calls for increasing financial inclusion, encouraging NGOs and governments to collaborate on capacity-building for women focusing on entrepreneurial skills, enhancing legal reforms with concrete enforcement mechanisms, and developing clear metrics to measure progress in supporting women.