

CAPTAINS CORNER

Say no to selfish anti-vaxxers



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

After an 11-day ordeal, tennis star Novak Djokovic lost his bid to make sports history and defend his championship in the Australian Open. Worse, he was deported from Australia for being unvaccinated.

Djokovic's defense was that he has recovered from COVID-19 in June 2020 and the antibodies from that attack was as good as a vaccination. The back story to that illness was that he and his wife tested positive after he played in a series of exhibition matches that he organised in Serbia and Croatia with zero social distancing amid the height of the coronavirus pandemic. The competition's record-holder, was initially approved for a medical exemption by Tennis Australia and the state of Victoria but border officials rejected the exemption and revoked his visa.

If "vaccination" was a trending word in 2021, there was also an opposite word: "anti-vaxxer". Many people have refused to take the vaccination, saying that they were unsure of the efficacy of the shots and that they were opposed to injecting just anything into their bodies without knowing the long-term effects. Even in Bahrain, where vaccination to safeguard against the virus is free, there are people who adopt the 'wait-and-watch' attitude.

Consider some recent statistics in the UK, a study tracking more than 200,000 people, nearly every single participant had developed antibodies against the virus within two weeks of their second dose and the jabs helped to reduce hospitalisation rates by 92-96%. As many health practitioners have repeated, the risks of severe side effects from a vaccine are tiny in comparison to the risk of the disease itself.

Yet a sizeable number of people are still reluctant to get the shots. According to a recent report by the International Monetary Fund, that ranges from around 10-20% of people in the UK to around 50% in Japan and 60% in France.

Given the growing number of variants popping up everyday and numbers increasing here in Bahrain despite the government's best efforts, we have to deploy the entire arsenal of weapons at our disposal against the pandemic. Bahrain has robust vaccination numbers but there are still people holding out and they must set aside their prejudices or else face the opposition of the public. Look at it this way: did you wait till you understood the working of how electricity reached your home to enjoy its benefits? I could ask you the same question about the internet and your smartphone and your answer would be "No". All these things do not harm society but your not taking a vaccination hurts us all. So do us all a favour and get jabbed – for your own good and ours.

(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)

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59th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty: German, French envoys to Bahrain call for boosting ties

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Principles of cooperation, maintaining peace and the need to remain open with neighbours dominated the talks when the ambassadors of France and Germany to Bahrain sat together yesterday for discussion around a breakfast table.

The meeting, held at the residence of the German Ambassador, focused on the activities of the ambassadors in the Kingdom and future projects to boost ties as they celebrate the 59th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty.

Commenting on the treaty, the French Ambassador to Bahrain, Jérôme Cauchard, said the treaty have taken up one of the noblest but also one of the most difficult challenges that can exist, "that of building peace in the first stage, after many years of conflict and war".

He added: "Then we built, step by step, a permanent and structured cooperation. And nowadays cooperation became a kind of "reflex" as each country spontaneously seeks out the other's views on key issues".

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FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN, JÉRÔME CAUCHARD

cooperation between Germany and France is never to exclude others, but to remain open for all European Union member states, to foster cooperation with neighbouring regions and to serve as a model of how cooperation can replace conflict," said Kai Boeckmann, the German Ambassador to Bahrain.

"Each generation must renew its understanding of this friendship, which is why youth is so important in our cooperation," he added.

"The underlying principle of cooperation between Germany and France is never to exclude others, but to remain open for all European Union member states, to foster cooperation with neighbouring regions and to serve as a model of how cooperation can replace conflict"

KAI BOECKMANN, THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN

The treaty, a major symbol of Franco-German friendship, was signed by French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed the treaty on 22 January 1963 in Paris. It aimed at increased cooperation between the two nations in international relations, defence and education.

Hidd sewage project 12% complete

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Construction works of the BD 3,285,603 mainline carrying sewage water in Hidd Industrial Area had reached 12% completion, said a top works ministry official.

Fathi Abdullah Al-Farea, the Assistant Undersecretary for Sanitation at the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, said the project would take two years to complete.

Al Farea said this during an inspection visit to the project site



in the presence of the head of the company executing the project, Abdul Hadi Al-Afwa LLC and engineers in the ministry.

The project, Al Farea said, includes the construction of 3.3 km of sewage lines, of which works



over 1.1 km is underway by the Open Cut method. "For the remaining 2.3 km line, we will use micro tunnelling machines."

The officials also said they would reestablish three pumping stations and remove 12 stations

from service. The project, he said, aims to reduce the cost of operation and maintenance for the old pumping station and raise the capacity of the sewage network from 2,300 cubic meters per day to approximately 24,000 cubic meters per day.

The final treatment of the sewage water will take place in the Muharraq treatment plant.

The tender board had awarded the project that falls within the national strategic plan to Abdul Hadi Al-Afwa Company.

BCCI should adopt 'No fees, No service' principle

● Adopt qualitative initiatives that all chamber members, including SMEs owners, find beneficial, or abandon the membership obligation
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Businessman Yaqoob Al Awadhi, a candidate for the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry's board of directors' elections, has emphasised the necessity of following the principle of "No fees, No service" at the chamber.

He explained that the chamber's board of directors has two options: either adopt qualitative initiatives that all chamber members, including SMEs owners, find beneficial, or abandon the membership obligation, and each merchant must pay a minimum of BD20 to renew his business registration.

The Chamber of Commerce, according to Al Awadhi, is ultimately a civil society institution whose function is to care for merchants and defend their interests, not to amass subscription funds in its treasury without all merchants, or at least most of them, feeling the Chamber's benefit to them.

"The Chamber's role should not be limited to ceremonies, visits, and press releases; instead, those in charge should take the lead in doing fieldwork on the ground, getting to know the needs of small and large businesses, and putting the commercial sector at the centre of the Chamber's interests and activities."

YAQOOB AL AWADHI, A CANDIDATE FOR THE BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ELECTIONS



"Is anyone able to answer from BCCI about the benefit of thousands of SMEs working in the car repair sector, for example in Salmabad and Souq Waqif? Or those operating in the food and beverage sector on Budaiya Street or the Jad Ali area or the old Manama and Muharraq markets? Or shops selling car accessories and abayas on Bukwara Street? Or entrepreneurs who own start-up companies in the e-commerce and applications sector?!, and many more," Al Awadhi wondered.

Al Awadhi pointed out that if the Chamber cannot provide its services to all its members, at least it can initiate the implementation of major projects that benefit the national economy, and whose benefit is reflected on Bahrainis by creating direct and indirect job opportunities, supporting GDP providing real support for the government's plans.

"The Chamber's role should not be limited to ceremonies, visits, and press releases; instead, those in charge should take the lead in doing fieldwork on the ground, getting to know the needs of small and large businesses, and putting the commercial sector at the centre of the Chamber's interests and activities. It should also endeavour to expand new markets for Bahraini goods and services, as

well as reactivate the committee's activity.

"If this occurs, the Bahraini merchant will go to the Chamber on his own to pay his subscriptions and renew his membership, motivated by his confidence in the Chamber's value in supporting and promoting his business," Al Awadhi added.

Al Awadhi noted that the issue of linking subscription to service was one of the goals he had set for himself in his campaign for the elections of the Chamber's Board of Directors' 30th session. "I raise this subject in my election platform to attract attention to its importance, and if I win membership on the chamber's board of directors, I guarantee every one will work on it," he concluded.