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Kurdistan Leadership invited at COP28, Pledging Commitment to Global Environmental Initiatives

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Editorial

“List 197” The Resounding Choice



By | **Dr. Salar Othman**

Why List 197?

The answer to the important question of which party to support becomes clear when we consider the history, perspective, and vision of the KDP. The KDP stands out in history, evoking a sense of pride due to its lack of historical setbacks and numerous accomplishments. Both rivals and allies acknowledge this fact. In terms of perspective and vision, the KDP advocates coexistence, a key principle of the party. Its vision aims to bridge the gaps and provide a solution roadmap that benefits both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. This vision places citizens at its core, emphasizing their well-being and interests. Looking towards the future, the KDP, as a political force, demonstrates an understanding of current challenges and a commitment to ensuring a positive future. This ability to navigate challenges positions the KDP as a guarantor of the future. Therefore, voters are justified in supporting List 197 of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, as it aligns with a promising vision and a track record of success.

The Advocacy Strength of the KDP

Renowned for its robust election campaigns, the KDP approaches elections with an unwavering and realistic mindset, grounded in a profound belief in its past, present, and future. This unshakable confidence translates into voters consistently placing their trust in the party, fostering a collective march toward a shared destiny. As a party deeply rooted in history, currently in government by the people's vote, the KDP, through democratic processes, is poised for a promising future. The weight behind the KDP's campaign in the Iraqi provincial council elections emanates from this profound sense of confidence and vision. While open to criticism, the party responds with strength and resilience, refuting false statements with clear evidence. In this heated campaign, the KDP encourages voters to rally behind List 197, an embodiment of historical depth,

present relevance, and a future devoted to a robust Kurdistan, coexistence, and citizen service.

Coexistence and Mutual Acceptance: Pillars of the KDP's Vision

Central to the KDP's agenda for the Iraqi provincial council elections are the principles of coexistence and mutual acceptance. These ideals have not only been part of the party's historical fabric since its inception but have been actively championed throughout its journey. The KDP, a stalwart defender of coexistence, mutual acceptance, and social peace, has shed blood for its homeland and remains committed to these principles. As voters cast their ballots, the illustrious history of the KDP beckons them to choose List 197, ensuring the continuation of coexistence, deepening mutual acceptance, and preventing negative religious and political dominance for a collective, national, legal, and constitutional rule.

Beyond Slogans

In the complex web of political choices, voters must navigate between lofty slogans and tangible actions. Every political entity presents its ideas and programs, but the discerning voter looks beyond mere rhetoric to assess which party has defended the homeland provided prosperity and ensured peace through genuine actions. It's not just about promises but about tangible results.

As voters evaluate the landscape, they must ask themselves: Which party has defended Kurdistan when it mattered most? Who has delivered on promises of services, prosperity, and peace? These questions demand a conscious, informed decision. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), a stalwart in defending and serving the region, emerges as a beacon of action. Voters, familiar with the KDP's track record, are urged to cast their votes for List 197, a manifestation of action, leadership, and a commitment to a prosperous future.

President Barzani: Components should decide on their fate



راگه‌پێندراویك له باره‌گای بارزانییهوه Daxuyaniyek ji Baregeha Barzani بیان من مقرر البارزانی

The Kurdistan Region's ethnic and religious components should be free to decide on their fate without any interference and be restricted to a "framework", according to a statement.

Barzani's statement, published by his office known as Barzani Headquarters on Sunday, comes amid legal challenges posed by a political party to the quota seats of religious and ethnic components at the Kurdistan Region's 111-member parliament.

"The components should be allowed to decide on their fate, and no restricted framework should be imposed on them," the press release said of "Barzani's viewpoint" on the matter.

The Kurdish leader also urged all sides not to associate their rights and entitlements with any "political interests," the statement added.

Per the current Kurdish election law, five seats of the 111-member chamber are al-

located to Chaldean and Assyrians as well as another one for an Armenian member of parliament.

Representatives from various Kurdistan Region components on Saturday gathered in Erbil in a bid to unify their voices against the legal challenges posed by numerous forces to the quota seats.

The PUK has also objected to the single-member district electoral system, arguing the current form has given electoral advantage to its rival, KDP, which has refused the allegations and expressed willingness to work out new legislation, so the long-delayed election is no longer delayed.

Due to political infighting, the Kurdistan Region parties could not agree on amending the election law last year, triggering the extension of the current Kurdistan Parliament term by a year.

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani in early August set Feb. 25, 2024 as the new date for holding elections.

KRG Delegation Set to Return to Baghdad for Salary Talks Amidst Financial Dispute

In the ongoing discussions surrounding the provision of salaries for Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) employees, a delegation from the KRG is slated to revisit Baghdad next week. Fares Isa, the head of KRG representation in Baghdad, revealed that an official letter has been dispatched to the Iraqi Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance, formally requesting three months' worth of salaries.

Isa affirmed that the KRG delegation plans to resume talks in Baghdad next week, aiming to further address and pursue their demands regarding salary provision. The delay in disbursing 700 billion dinars last month was attributed to the Iraqi Finance Minister's absence abroad, resulting in the completion of procedures but a subsequent delay until the following week.

The KRG has urged the federal government to approve amendments to the federal budget law and submit it to the Iraqi parliament, emphasizing the need for salary provisions independent of actual expenditure, oil conflicts, and non-oil revenue challenges.

In response to Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's recommendations, a KRG dele-

gation had previously presented two proposals in Baghdad last month. The delegation insisted on the immediate transfer of 700 billion dinars until the budget law is ratified, covering the months of October, November, and December.

Despite the stipulations in the federal budget law, the federal government has yet to disburse the Kurdistan Region's share, despite the KRG fulfilling its obligations as outlined in the law. The Iraqi Council of Ministers had earlier approved a loan of 500 billion dinars for the Kurdistan Region to resolve technical disputes between Erbil and Baghdad related to budget law implementation.

Following a high-level delegation led by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's visit to Baghdad in September, the Iraqi Council of Ministers sanctioned the remittance of 700 billion dinars in monthly loans for September, October, and November. The Kurdistan Regional Government reported that 250 billion dinars were deposited on September 28, 2023, and an additional 200 billion dinars on the same day through Rafidain Bank and the Iraqi Commercial Bank, respectively."



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Kirkuk: KDP Reopens Offices as Pivotal Election Ahead

Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) has reopened its offices in Kirkuk and officially launched the election campaign ahead of the crucial provisional election, which is opted to put an end to the current “forcibly imposed” administration that has been ruling the province since October 2017.

In a widely attended public ceremony, KDP officially opened its offices in Kirkuk the last week of November. The KDP offices were closed in the aftermath of 16 October events as the Iraqi forces and militias took control in the city and occupied some of the offices as military bases. In the ceremony, Kamal Kirkuki, the Head of KDP’s Bureau in Kirkuk and Garmiyān emphasized that party’s agenda for Kirkuk focuses on upholding the coexistence, lifting the injustice and enhancing the governance on a robust foundation, ensuring the security and stability for all the components of the province, also extending support to the marginalized groups and parties. Kirkuki offered the gratitude of his party to the people of Kirkuk for the warm welcome to the KDP’s comeback to the city. He also underscored KDP’s dedication to the safeguarding the constitu-



tional rights of the Kurds in Kirkuk, Kurdistan Region and across Iraq.

Forming a genuine representation through the upcoming election in order to “normalize” the situation in the province stands the primary goal the Kurdish parties, notably KDP, in Kirkuk. Mohammed Khursheed, a KDP’s candidate for Kirkuk’s provincial council envisions that if Kurds gain the majority in the election, the new Provincial Council would eliminate the injustice that has been imposed on people of Kirkuk. “People of Kirkuk recognize KDP’s

ability to make changes, above all, [replacing] the governor who has unlawfully abused his authority for his own personal gain” Khursheed affirmed. He added that they have documented the corruption within the current administration and emphasized that they will not keep quiet about it. Khursheed pledged that KDP aims to collectively govern Kirkuk alongside other parties through the peoples’ authentic representatives, expressing the desire for Kirkuk’s situation to normalize again. “Our message to other parties that we work together in

serving people of Kirkuk” Khursheed concluded.

Though the main Kurdish parties have decided to run separately for the election, KDP and Kurdistan Patriotic Union (PUK) seem not to be far from a mutual understanding in regard to the importance of jointly governing Kirkuk in the coming phase. Both parties agree that the partisan interests should be set aside when it comes to Kirkuk, given immense significance of the province to Kurdistan Region. Hemin Hawrami, member of KDP’s Political Bureau stated during a visit to Kirkuk that KDP

wants a “patriotic Kurd” to be appointed as the next governor of Kirkuk, regardless of the person’s political affiliation. “KDP and PUK are two distinct parties, but we should be united on the crucial patriotic matters” Hawrami reiterated, calling on the PUK counterpart to work together and built a foundation for a greater success for the next Iraqi parliamentary election, in order to mount more pressure on Iraq to implement the Constitution and its Article 140 on the disputed territories. Meanwhile, PUK’s Political Bureau member Shalaw Kosrat

highlighted to Kurdish media outlets last week that KDP and PUK could jointly govern Kirkuk. He emphasized the importance of unity among both parties, as well as the other Kurdish parties for the benefit of the people of Kirkuk.

In the previous Provincial Council election held in 2005, Kurds won 26 out of 41 seats, while Turkmen and Arabs secured 9 and 6 seats respectively. The number of seats has decreased to 15 seats in the upcoming Provincial Council of Kirkuk, following the recalculation of seat distribution by the Iraqi High Electoral Commission for each province in accordance with the population of each province.

Prior to 2003, over 250 thousand Kurds were forcibly displaced to the other cities in Kurdistan Region by the former Iraqi regime. After fall of the regime in 2003, the families started to return to Kirkuk and transferred their registry back to Kirkuk. Currently, certain Arab and Turkmen parties demand the exclusion of the Kurds who had returned to Kirkuk after 2003 to vote in the election, a demand Kurds vehemently oppose.

By Shvan Goran

Kurds Optimistic for Majority Win in Ninawa Provincial Council Elections

Kurdish parties are hoping for more gains in the upcoming provisional council elections in Ninawa Province, aiming to spearhead the province’s reconstruction and foster post-war recovery.

Ninawa provincial council elections is to be held along with other 14 Iraqi provinces on December 18th. Over 600 candidates are competing for 29 seats of Ninawa’s Provincial Council. Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) will participate independently, while three other Kurdish parties have formed alliances with other components of the province for the upcoming election. Over 30 lists and independent candidates are competing over the 29 seats in the Provincial Council in Ninawa. KDP has nominated 52 candidates, representing diverse religious and ethnic components of the province for the election.

The KDP officials regard

the upcoming election in the province as crucial, amid the volatile security and administrative situation in the disputed areas within Ninawa, aspiring that results of the election will pave the way to normalization and stability in those areas. In the upcoming election, the KDP is aiming to play a more pivotal role in the reconstruction, and re-establishing security and stability in the province. Head of the KDP’s Bureau in Ninawa, Nawzad Hadi said in a statement to Kurdish media outlets, following a public meeting the last week of November with the Ninawa’s community leaders, that KDP’s agenda in the election has gained the trust of people of Ninawa. Hadi pointed out that KDP would commit to providing services, strengthening coexistence of the components if they secured the majority of the seats. The official added that KDP list is currently

the strongest list within Ninawa, given that it enjoys widespread public support among the diverse population in the province, and is hoping that the list will secure the first place in the election in Ninawa.

KDP officials have also pledged to embody Kurdistan Region’s experience in terms of construction in Ninawa if the KDP list attains the majority of seats in the province. Among the KDP’s agenda for Ninawa Provincial Council is the implementation of Sinjar Agreement and normalization of the area. Furthermore, it aims to fortify coexistence among the diverse components within the province. The head of KDP’s 14th branch in Mosul, Ali Khalil said that they are optimistic that Kurds, Arabs and other ethnic and religious components would numerously vote for the KDP in this election. “In case we win the majority

and took power in Ninawa, we’ll provide services and reconstruct Mosul and the surrounding areas similar to Kurdistan Region” pledged Khalil, calling on people of Ninawa to vote for the KDP list in the provincial council election.

The presence of the various armed groups and militias, on the other hand, has posed a significant challenge to the security situation in Ninawa Province, in particular Ninawa Plain and Sinjar. The armed groups have reportedly restricted access to some areas under their influence on the Kurdish candidates to freely conduct their election campaigns. Though the Kurds have dedicated to upholding stability in Ninawa; however, the Kurdish lists and candidates encounter significant challenges to exercise their right to free campaigning for this election in the province. Notably, KDP’s candidates encounter constraints in

conducting election rallies and engaging in campaign activities. Afram Hussain, a female KDP candidate voices concerns that she and other candidates in her bloc are prevented to exercise their campaign rights within the province and, are not able reach all the areas in the province. “We intend to become strong, and a decision maker in Ninawa Provincial Council in order to normalize the situation in the disputed areas, especially Ninawa Plain and Sinjar”, Ms. Hussain hoped, despite the challenges she and other candidates in the list are facing.

According to Iraq High Electoral Commission (IHEC), 1,8 million voters in Ninawa Province were eligible to vote in the last parliamentary elections held in 2021, and the election witnessed a turnout of 48%. As of now, many displaced families have not yet returned to their areas of origin in the prov-

ince, and the infrastructure of the province has still not been rebuilt following the massive military campaign to liberate the areas from ISIS in 2016. This may still pose a factor on low turnout in the coming election.

In the previous provincial council election held in 2013, KDP secured 9 out of 37 seats in Ninawa, securing key administrative positions such as the head of the provincial council and the deputy governor. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on the other hand secured 3 seats in the past election but opted to remain outside the alliance governing the province’s administration.

The Provincial Council of Ninawa has comprised of 29 seats, including 3 quota seats for Yezidi and Shabak Kurds, and Christians respectively.

By Shvan Goran

Kurdistan Leadership invited at COP28, Pledging Commitment to Global Environmental Initiatives

The President and Prime Ministers of the Kurdistan Region participated in the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The conference, considered one of the most significant events in the global climate change discourse, brought together world leaders and representatives from various nations. The President of the Kurdistan Region and the Prime Ministers of the Kurdistan Regional Government actively engaged in discussions and activities during COP28.



On the first day of the conference, the delegation from the Kurdistan Region, led by Nechirvan Barzani, the President of the Kurdistan Region, and Masrour Barzani, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, attended the formal opening ceremony of the UAE government's COP28 presidency.

During the conference, amid international diplomatic efforts, Nechirvan Barzani and Masrour Barzani, representing the Kurdistan Region, participated in the official presentation of the Zayed Sustainability Prize at a ceremony held in Dubai. The participation of the Kurdistan Region's leadership in the 28th COP was considered a significant step towards addressing global environmental challenges.

The conference emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to address the impacts of climate change globally. The leaders of the Kurdistan Region actively contributed to discussions and engaged with international counterparts. The 28th COP saw commitments and discussions on global climate initiatives and the role that regions like Kurdistan can play in addressing environmental concerns.

In addition to their participation in the conference, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani and Prime Minister Masrour Barzani utilized social media platforms, including X (formerly known as Twitter), to share their perspectives on the conference and express their commitment to global climate action. They highlighted the significance of their presence at COP28 and stressed the need for collective efforts to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Furthermore, the Kurdistan Regional Government acknowledged the achievements of the conference, emphasizing the need for continued collaboration and proactive measures to address climate change. Kurdistan Region President, Nechirvan Barzani, in a statement on social media, expressed his satisfaction with the participation and stressed the importance of global cooperation to achieve meaningful results in addressing climate change.

In a subsequent development, on the 5th of December 2023, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani attended a meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and

Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. The meeting aimed to discuss and further enhance bilateral relations between the Kurdistan Region and the UAE.

Additionally, the Kurdistan Regional Government affirmed its commitment to environmental initiatives and sustainable practices. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, in a message on X, stated that he was pleased to participate in the COP28 conference and highlighted the importance of implementing effective strategies to address the challenges posed by climate change.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations also played a role in advocating for global climate action. Antonia Guterres, the Secretary-General, expressed concern over the urgency of addressing climate-related issues and emphasized the need for international cooperation to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The participation of the Kurdistan Region's leadership in COP28 demonstrated their commitment to global environmental efforts. The leaders actively engaged in discussions shared their perspectives on social

media and emphasized the importance of collective action to address climate change challenges at both regional and global levels.

Breaking Ground: Kurdistan's Government Unveils Strategic Plan to Achieve Zero Gas Flaring by 2030

In pursuit of sustaining the vitality and ecological balance of Kurdistan's environment and addressing the strategic challenges of the energy sector, the 9th Cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government led by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani has undertaken significant endeavors across various ministries, directorates, and environmental agencies.

On July 10, 2019, Masrour Barzani, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, emphasized in the ninth cabinet's agenda that 'Kurdistan's environment is the largest asset of the Kurdistan Region,' and efforts are directed towards preserving the environment and implementing environmentally friendly practices. These efforts include the establishment of a recycling system, waste reduction, and the implementation of ecological measures in

the region's governmental institutions, directorates, and environmental departments.

In April 2021, the 9th Cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government took a decision to stop gas flaring across all oil fields within the Kurdistan Region and allocated the revenue generated from the sale of associated gas to contribute to environmental and developmental projects. Following this decision, more than 150 million cubic meters of gas were utilized daily, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting the region's environmental and developmental initiatives. This step was crucial in addressing environmental challenges and reducing air pollution.

Over the past four years, the Kurdistan Regional Government has successfully developed six landfill sites, leading to the proper disposal of more than six million metric tons of waste. This has significantly reduced the environmental impact and facilitated the closure of more than two million illegal dumpsites. Additionally, efforts have been made to minimize the generation of hazardous medical

waste, with a 90% reduction achieved through the establishment of modern medical waste incinerators.

In the field of agriculture in Kurdistan, more than six million fruit trees have been planted for reforestation, contributing to the improvement of air quality, and supporting biodiversity. The government has also created over 100 beekeeping points to encourage apiculture and boost pollination.

In the quest for clean energy, the 9th Cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government has initiated a major project with a budget of \$100 million, aiming to generate 25 megawatts of power. This project is expected to be operational by 2024 and will play a significant role in diversifying energy sources and promoting sustainable practices.

To further enhance the clean energy sector, in May 2023, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani inaugurated the largest recycling facility in Hewler (Erbil). This facility, which meets international standards, represents a crucial step in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Moreover, the 9th Cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government has imposed a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, with plans to increase it to nearly 20%. The government has also unveiled a strategic plan aiming to achieve zero gas flaring by the year 2030, demonstrating its dedication to environmental preservation.

In conclusion, the government's commitment to environmental conservation is reflected in various projects and policies aimed at sustainable development. The emphasis on waste reduction, recycling, clean energy, and strategic planning underscores the Kurdistan Regional Government's dedication to creating a healthier and more sustainable environment for the region's residents."

Coordination Framework Condemns Attack on US Embassy, Reiterates Commitment to Security

The Coordination Framework swiftly responded, condemning the recent attack on the US Embassy in Iraq, emphasizing their commitment to national security and diplomatic mission protection in an emergency meeting held on Friday, December 8, 2023.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Coordination Framework articulated its firm stance by denouncing the assault on the US Embassy in Iraq. It underscored its dedication to safeguarding the nation's security and sovereignty, aligning with the government's proactive measures to address the pressing security situation.

The Coordination Framework convened an emergency meeting to thoroughly examine the security landscape within the country, unequivocally rejecting terrorist activities aimed at compromising national security. The statement conveyed a resolute message, expressing solidarity with the government's actions while emphasizing the imperative of shielding diplomatic missions.

Security sources reported that the US embassy in Baghdad's Green Zone was targeted by several missiles on Friday morning, triggering alarms both



within and around the embassy premises. Preliminary reports indicated multiple missile impacts, prompting the declaration of a state of emergency.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shiah Sudani, who concurrently serves as the commander-in-chief

of the armed forces, unequivocally condemned the attack. In an official statement, he characterized any actions that jeopardized Iraq's stability, tarnished its political reputation, and target legally protected locations as terrorist acts. Prime Minister

Sudani vehemently stated that the targeting of diplomatic missions is categorically unacceptable.

Highlighting the gravity of the situation, Prime Minister Sudani underscored the commitment of Iraqi security forces and government agencies to

protect diplomatic envoys. He emphasized adherence to international agreements aimed at safeguarding diplomatic personnel and warned of decisive action against those who undermine Iraq's sovereignty and stability. The resolute message conveyed by the

Coordination Framework and Prime Minister Sudani underscores a collective determination to address and counteract threats to the nation's security and diplomatic sanctity.

Drone Attack Targets Civilian Building in Erbil, Kurdistan Counter-Terrorism Responds



In a worrying incident, a drone bomber targeted a civilian building in Erbil, as confirmed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The unsettling event unfolded on the evening of December 8, 2023.

The KRG promptly issued a statement in response to the alarming situation, countering earlier speculations of an attack on Erbil International Airport. The assertion came in the wake of a conspicuous loud noise that reverberated through Erbil on Friday evening, triggering concerns, and prompting some media outlets to erroneously report an as-

sault on the airport.

Ahmad Hoshyar, the director of Erbil International Airport, refuted the claims of an attack on the airport. He explicitly denied any correlation between the audible disturbance in Erbil and activities within the airport premises.

Based on on-the-ground investigation revealed that the source of the sound emanated from the vicinity of the 32nd neighborhood of Park, situated to the west of Erbil. The incident raises questions about the potential threats faced by civilian structures amid evolving geopolitical tensions.

Salahadin University hosted first research competition in Kurdistan

For the first time in the Kurdistan Region, a competition for academic research was held at Salahadin University with 33 researchers in various scientific fields taking part.

Nabil Fakhri, the Director of Quality Insurance and Development Program at Salahadin University told the KRG's Department of Media and Information that the University hosted the competition with the participation of 33 graduating students representing 18 universities in the Kurdistan Region.

Fakhri stated that the competition is of its first kind in Kurdistan where students had the opportunity to present their academic research, adding that the competition will continue for the next year which will help the students showcase their academic and scientific work.

Havin Burhan, who is one of the participants of the competition, presented her graduation research



at the competition, said that competitions of such kind are important to give more visibility to the researchers and guide grad-

uating students with their research and final year projects.

The research competition project accepted

papers in most fields, including humanities, technology, health sciences, economics and management, environmental sci-

ences, and climate change. A specialized committee consisting of several professors in each field evaluated the papers where

the best research paper in each field received recognition and award.

Diary production in Kurdistan's Garmian region rises to 10 tons

Garmian diary project has the capacity to produce 10 tons of milk and other diary products where it meets the local demands, and the products are being delivered to markets throughout the Kurdistan Region and southern Iraqi provinces.

Ali Akbar, the manager of Garmian Dairy Company, in an interview with the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Department of Media and Information, stated that the diary project has 500 diary cattle with the capacity of producing 10 tons of milk on daily basis. Akbar added that the milks are delivered to the company to produce diary products.

He mentioned that their products have exceeded the local demands and have started finding markets for the products in other areas of the Kurdistan Region and southern Iraqi cities.



"We are planning to expand the company by increasing the number of diary cattle to 1000 which will offer more job op-

portunities and increase the diary production," the company's manager said.

Dashty Hassan, project manager at the Garmian

Dairy Company, told the KRG website that the project has cost \$10 million, and the work is ongoing to expand the project to not

only increase the production but also provide more job opportunities for the local community.

On May 30, Kurdistan

Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani inaugurated a dairy factory in Erbil Province's Mergasor District with the aim of diversifying economy and increasing the local diary production.

The Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani previously announced that under the KRG's ninth cabinet, pastoral farming projects have experienced a significant 75% increase. Currently, there are 87 such projects in operation, consisting of 14,609 dairy cows spread throughout the Kurdistan Region.

According to a statement from the KRG, the largest dairy factory, worth \$60 million, will soon be opened in Semel district of Duhok Province, which is part of the strategic plans of the KRG's Ninth Cabinet develop agriculture sector in Kurdistan.

Choman: Unveiling the Hidden Beauty of Kurdistan



Surrounded by the breathtaking landscapes of the Kurdistan Region, Choman is a haven for intrepid travelers seeking authentic and unusual experiences

Surrounded by majestic mountains and lush valleys, Choman is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered by those seeking adventure and cultural experiences. A Natural Choman's fame lies in its untouched natural beauty.

Mountains, valleys and rivers surround the city, creating an unparalleled canvas for nature lovers. Hiking trails wind through rugged terrain, offering panoramic views that are almost surreal.

As the sun sets behind the mountains, the landscape changes, casting a warm glow over this pristine reserve. For the adventurous, Choman offers a playground full of possibilities. Challenging terrain invites adventurers to hike, promising not only physical exercise but also a close connection with nature.

Camping under a starry sky, surrounded by the tranquility of the mountains, is an experience that will forever

be etched in the memory of those looking to explore the wild side of Choman. In addition to its natural splendor, Choman has a rich cultural diversity. Traditional villages dot the landscape, each with its own charm. Hospitality here isn't just an act, it's a way of life.

Interacting with the locals will give you an insight into the traditions of Kurdish culture and give you a taste of traditional cuisine, folklore, and festivals that have stood the test of time. Choman has huge tourism potential but also faces challenges posed by emerging destinations. Infrastructure development is an ongoing process and cities are facing change.

The area attracts many tourists due to the wide range of tourist facilities such as summer resorts, parks, rivers, green pastures and waterfalls. As more travelers discover Choman's charms, opportunities arise for sustainable

tourism practices that enrich the visitor experience and protect the region's cultural and natural heritage.

Some of the picturesque places people usually visit include:

Walze Waterfall

The Walze Waterfall is one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the country. It is located southeast of the Choman district, about 3 kilometers from the Qasre sub-district. Many people come from all over the country to visit this gorgeous natural site.

Haji Omran

Part of Choman district, Haji Omran is known for its hills, streams and meadows. Surrounded by mountains, including Mount Sakran to the south, the region receives an abundance of rain and snow during winter and spring months. Lying at an altitude of 1900 m, Haji Omran is one of the main border cross-

ings between Iraq and Iran.

Halgurd Mountain (the highest) in Iraq

For the adventurous this is the ultimate expedition! Visitors can choose to climb the highest mountain in Iraq with an altitude of 3,609 m. Halgurd Mountain certainly takes one's breath away and is sure to be an unforgettable experience.

Barza Cave and Waterfall

The Barza cave was used by prehistoric peoples as homes and later provided refuge for Kurdish freedom fighters during their fight against military forces. Nowadays, the cool cave provides shelter for tourists during warm summer months.

Bsta waterfall

Just 3 Km from Bsta village, in the North-East of Choman, lies the Bsta waterfall. The area is calm and refreshing; the water splashing of

the fall gives a fresh and pleasant feel. It is a perfect place for picnics and sightseeing.

Sheikh Balk Shrine

The 17th century Sheikh was known for his faith and introduced the Al Sehrudia doctrine to Islam. The Sheikh's impact continues to this day through his thousands of followers who regularly visit the shrine.

Sakran Valley

Sakran Valley is a lush, green valley surrounded by trees, flowers, creeks and birds. High up in the mountain, a traditional village offers visitors a chance to experience Kurdish hospitality and see how rural families live.

Rost Citadel

Rost Citadel is located in Rosti village, 137 km north of Erbil city and east of Halgurd. Built at the top of the mountain, the citadel is one of the most important archaeological sites in

the area.

Rost Valley

Rost Valley is located at the foot of Halgurd Mountain, 137 km northeast of Erbil province, near Sirin village, on the highway between Soran and Choman. The valley has an abundance of fresh water, forests, and orchards, and a small river passes through the valley. Rich in folklore and tradition, the area is popular with tourists seeking rest and relaxation.

Gomi Felaw

Gomi Felaw is an area set on the fringe of the Halgurd-Sakran Mountains with a perfect alpine lake seemingly on the edge of the world, teetering at the alley's periphery and surrounded by emerald-green grasses and a flowering tree. Across the valley is a ridge of snow-capped peaks that seem to loom over as you explore the lake.

Cultivating Prosperity: Kurdistan's Pomegranate Export Initiative Sparks Economic Growth and Global Recognition

"Kurdistan's Pomegranate Export Initiative Flourishes: 20 Tons Shipped to Qatar in Ongoing Success"



In a remarkable stride towards economic development, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has continued its successful pomegranate export initiative for the second consecutive year. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, this ambitious project has gained momentum, with 20 tons of premium Kurdistan pomegranates recently making their way to Qatar. This follows the Prime Minister's groundbreaking agricultural export initiative launched in March 2022, aimed at showcasing the agricultural prowess of the Kurdistan Region on the global stage.

Pomegranate Boom in Kurdistan

Under the enthusiastic support of Prime Minister Barzani and the ninth cabinet, pomegranate production in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has witnessed a significant surge, reaching an impressive 70,000 tons this year. The Prime Minister's com-

mitment to farmers and the agricultural sector has been instrumental in achieving this milestone.

As part of the export initiative, the goal is to export more than 100 tons of pomegranates by the end of the month. Notably, Carrefour Iraq has already sold 10 tons of these delicious fruits in its markets, contributing to the growth of the domestic market. Additionally, Sulaimani International Airport facilitated the export of 20 tons of Halabja pomegranates to Qatar, while another 20 tons found their way to the UAE markets.

Expanding Global Footprint

Last year's success story saw 2,000 tons of pomegranates from Halabja and Zakho orchards exported to the UAE and subsequently to other Gulf markets. Building on this triumph, the ninth cabinet has worked diligently to facilitate the export of Kurdish pomegranates to the UK and European markets, demonstrating

the region's commitment to expanding its global footprint in the agricultural sector.

Empowering Farmers and Boosting Employment

Prime Minister Barzani's office reports a notable increase in competition and private sector participation in the tender process, indicating a positive trend in the agricultural industry. Notably, 20 farmers from 11 orchards were involved in preparing the exported pomegranates, showcasing the best varieties that are in high demand worldwide. This export project has created approximately 700 jobs, providing a significant boost to the local economy.

Kurdistan's Pomegranate Orchards

The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government reveals that more than 20,000 acres of land across the region have been transformed into pomegranate or-

chards. Halabja province alone accounts for half of this acreage, with its fertile soil contributing to the success of pomegranate production. Halabja boasts 11,000 acres of land dedicated to pomegranates, making it a key player in this agricultural boom.

On every acre of land, a total of 200 pomegranate trees are carefully planted, with each tree yielding an impressive 20 kilograms of pomegranates. The collective efforts in the pomegranate orchards throughout the Kurdistan Region involve approximately 5,000 dedicated farmers and workers. Halabja stands out as an exceptionally fertile and privileged region for pomegranate cultivation, owing to its optimal moisture levels. The annual pomegranate harvest in Halabja reaches an impressive 30,000 to 35,000 tons, underscoring the region's robust contribution to the flourishing pomegranate industry.

The Zakho pomegranate, cultivated in the vil-

lage of Armshte, is another noteworthy variety, with 73 farmers tending to 127 pomegranate orchards.

Objectives and Achievements of the Export Project

The primary objectives of the pomegranate export initiative include boosting demand for Kurdistan's pomegranate products domestically and internationally. By involving the private sector and local companies, the project aims to empower farmers to take an active role in exporting their products.

As a testament to its success, the project has not only met but exceeded expectations. The continuous filling of Gulf markets with Kurdistan pomegranates has heightened global awareness and demand for this exceptional product. The initiative has also stimulated increased agricultural production, reviving the sector and encouraging farmers to prioritize the quality of their products.

On the commercial

front, this year's export process marks a significant development, with Kurdistan pomegranates being transported by air to Gulf countries. This strategic move ensures the preservation of product quality and facilitates rapid access to global markets, reinforcing the region's commitment to delivering high-quality products on the international stage.

Finally, Kurdistan's pomegranate export success is a testament to the region's commitment to economic growth and the development of its agricultural sector. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's vision and the efforts of the ninth cabinet have not only realized the goals set last year but have propelled Kurdistan's pomegranates into the international spotlight. As the project continues to thrive, it is clear that Kurdistan's flavorful pomegranates are making a lasting impression on the world stage.

Garmian Rice Thrives: KRG Boosts Export to Central and Southern Iraq

Garmian Rice Brilliance: Expanding Export Frontiers

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) revealed on December 2, 2023, that the fertile soil of Garmian is yielding three distinct varieties of rice, annually exported to central and southern Iraqi cities.

According to the KRG Media and Information Office, farmers in Garmian are currently engaged in harvesting their rice crops this season, showcasing the region's agricultural prowess.

The rice varieties cultivated in Garmian, namely Bazian, Kurdish, and Brazilian, are highly sought after, with this year's pro-

duction anticipated to exceed 1400 tons.

Mohammed Abdullah, a farmer cultivating 30 acres of rice, expressed, "The rice is of excellent quality and experiences significant demand. It finds its way to central and southern Iraq, contributing to our region's thriving agricultural exports."

Ismail Mohammed, the head of Garmian Agricultural Services Department, informed the Media and Information website, "Over 1,600 acres of Garmian's land have been dedicated to rice cultivation, solidifying our commitment to meet the demands of Iraq's



rice market."

He further highlighted the popularity of Kurdish rice within the Kurdistan

Region, and beyond, emphasizing the KRG's annual efforts to enhance the sector and provide crucial

support to local farmers. This initiative not only bolsters the agricultural landscape in Garmian but

also contributes significantly to the broader economic development of the Kurdistan Region.

Kurdistan Region Flourishes in Potato Exports, Anticipates Further Agricultural Expansion



The Kurdistan Region celebrates a significant agricultural milestone as more than 12,000 tons of potatoes have been successfully exported, according to the latest statistics.

Hemn Sayed Murad, Director General of Agriculture in Erbil, stated: "The current figures reveal that 12,000 tons of potatoes have been exported, not only meeting the domestic

needs of the Kurdistan Region but also contributing to the supply in various Iraqi cities."

Highlighting the diverse sources of these exports, Murad added, "Potatoes

Potato Prosperity: 12,000 Tons Soar Beyond Borders

from all areas of the Kurdistan Region have made their way into these exports, with a notable concentration from farmers in Erbil province."

The surge in demand in foreign markets has been a driving force behind this success, leading to a remarkable potato production of 500,000 tons in Erbil province alone. Recognizing the ample production capacity, there is now a call to expedite the export process and broaden the marketing horizons for farmers in the Kurdistan Region.

In a parallel develop-

ment, the Director General of Agriculture in Erbil shared that, in collaboration with the German organization WHH, agricultural supplies were distributed to farmers in the Qushtpa area. This initiative saw 51 farmers benefitting from seeds for tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and eggplants.

The ninth cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) continues to prioritize the agricultural sector as a key driver of economic development. In a recent development under the direct supervision of Prime Minister Masrour

Barzani, two tons of Kurdistan honey were exported to Qatar, showcasing the government's commitment to supporting and promoting local products on the international stage.

Looking ahead, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has ambitious plans to further diversify its agricultural exports. Eggs and chicken meat are poised to join the list of exported commodities in the near future, reinforcing the region's commitment to sustainable economic growth and robust domestic production.

Kurdistan Gears Up for Poultry Export Milestone: Chickens and Eggs on the Horizon

Poultry Powerhouse: Kurdistan from Self-Sufficiency to Global Exporter

Poultry production in the Kurdistan Region has reached a level of self-sufficiency, signaling a momentous step towards exporting eggs and chicken meat in the near future, as confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hemn Sayed Murad, the Director General of Agriculture in Erbil, shared insights stating, "Currently, poultry production exceeds the threshold of self-sufficiency, indicating that domestic needs have been adequately met."

He further disclosed that a committee from the UAE visited the Kurdistan Region last year to assess the situation, expressing serious consideration. "Some of the Kurdistan Region's poultry products are scheduled for inspection shortly," Murad added, hinting at an imminent export venture to Gulf countries.

Kurdistan's Sweet Success: Honey Exports Lay Foundation for Future Trade Opportunities

The agricultural sector has been a focal point for the ninth cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), aligning with broader economic development goals. Recent endeavors include the successful export of two tons of high-quality Kurdistan honey to Qatar, a significant achievement supervised directly by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) proudly announced the arrival of two tons of premium honey in Qatar,

following Prime Minister Barzani's proactive involvement. Notably, one ton of exquisite honey has already been sold in local markets in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq, with further availability expected soon. This initiative not only aids local beekeepers but also stimulates economic growth, creating job opportunities for approximately 100 individuals.

Under Prime Minister Barzani's direct supervision and with the collaborative support of the Ministry of Agriculture

and Water Resources, the Prime Minister's Office, and the private sector, more than 200 beekeepers participated in this venture. The exported honey originates from various regions within the Kurdistan Region, fostering new relationships with vendors and markets in Qatar and other Gulf countries.

This successful foray into honey exports serves as a foundation for future endeavors, creating new trade opportunities between the Kurdistan Region and Gulf countries.

The Ministry of Agriculture, under the leadership of the ninth cabinet, has previously facilitated the export of various products, including pomegranates, strawberries, apples, figs, Kurdish rice, tahini, tomatoes, and honey. This ongoing commitment positions the Kurdistan Region as a promising contributor to the global market, with potential expansions into additional product categories in the pipeline.

To preserve the Kurdistan region lies in unifying the Kurdish ranks



By *Saadula Agrawi*

Baghdad's preoccupation with restoring Shaping governance in Kurdistan by depriving it of its own benefits

The Iraqi Federalism regime, which represents the largest part of the gains of the liberation process of Iraq in 2003, is at risk of collapse what will come with the return of central rule to this country

It's seems, that the Government in Iraq want to restore the central state system. I believe that the only solution to preserve the Kurdistan region lies in unifying the Kurdish ranks.

The constitution in Iraq was nothing but a partisan message and until now the situation is like this, so the authority of the parties is above the constitution. Iraq does not have the slightest commitment to the constitution and there is nothing but sloganeering. The Iraqi Federalism regime, which represents the largest part of the gains of the liberation of Iraq in 2003, is at risk of collapse what will come with the return of central rule to this country.

Federalism, according to this concept, is a type of voluntary union between separate political entities or disparate nationalities and races that have decided to live within a single political entity in which the nationalities, races, or united countries retain internal powers within their local borders, provided that basic sovereign powers are granted to the federal authority at the center.

Baghdad is currently seeking to restore central rule by empowering the region and depriving it of its financial sources. Some believe that the central system is most appropriate for the countries of the Middle East, even though it may lead to clashes in multiple societies, but Iraq is continuing to abolish "federalism," this unique legacy that was achieved with the occupation of Iraq by the American army." Some talk about Baghdad's preoccupation with restoring Shaping governance in Kurdistan by depriving it of its own

benefits. These attempts represent a danger to the Kurdish entity, which has achieved a kind of autonomy after dozens of decades of national struggle and after great sacrifices were made on this path.

As for the return of the Kurdistan Democratic Party to its headquarters in Kirkuk, according to the constitution, any Iraqi party has the right to practice its activity in any city, but the problem is that they view us as Kurds, and we are treated on this basis only, and they have a problem with the rights of the Kurdish people and what is happening. In Baghdad, it is hostile to the rights of the Kurds everywhere, especially in Kirkuk.

It is clear that the political differences between the parties in the Kurdistan Region, and the lack of unity among the Kurdish ranks, have made more room for Baghdad to exert pressure on the Kurdish people. It is no secret that officials in Baghdad want to restore the central state and are dissatisfied with the existence of the federal system.

I believe that the only solution to these situations is to rearrange the Kurdish house and the unity of the ranks to confront the threats, and I am confident that if this happens, Baghdad's position will change within one day regarding Kirkuk and the Kurdistan Region in general. The Kurdistan Regional Government confirmed that Baghdad's failure to send financial dues to Kurdistan harms the citizens of the region. Baghdad's failure to send the region's financial dues confirmed in the federal general budget is a violation of constitutional agreements, harms the region's citizens, and undermines confidence. Officials in the Kurdistan Region say that the federal government is disavowing all agreements it concludes with the regional government, even though the Kurdistan Region has fulfilled all its obligations, within the framework of the budget law and the

constitution. In exchange for the region's obligations, the total financial dues must be paid according to the Iraqi budget schedules. The system proposed in the constitution emulates these global experiences, and the countries that adopted the federal system were able to spread democracy and prevent tyranny, and achieved for their people progress, prosperity, and a decent life, which is what the Iraqi people richly deserve

Federalism is defined as a political system that requires a number of countries or nationalities, often small, to give up their powers, privileges, and independence in favor of a higher, unified authority that represents them on the international scene and is their reference in everything related to sovereignty, national security, defense, and foreign policy. Federalism, according to this concept, is a type of voluntary union between separate political entities or disparate nationalities and races that have decided to live within a single political entity in which the nationalities, races, or united countries retain internal powers within their local borders, provided that basic sovereign powers are granted to the federal authority at the center. Federal entities in the world revolve around this concept, although they differ among themselves in the causes, historical roots, stages of formation and results. In the twentieth century in particular, the phenomenon of federalism was linked to the principles of defending the rights of small national and religious minorities and ethnicities, with a tendency towards weakening the concept of the central state. Therefore, the federal union was focused as a means.

To bring together diverse religious, ethnic and sectarian entities within the framework of one state. There are about 25 countries in the world today that adopt a federal system, including large



countries such as the United States, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, India, and Russia. Among them are also poor and developing countries such as Ethiopia, Mexico, Malaysia, and others. As for our Arab region, the United Arab Emirates is the first federal experience that Sudan recently joined.

We can draw inspiration from three global experiences in adopting the federal system and try to compare them with the relevant texts in the draft Iraqi constitution, in order to discover the extent of the relationship of federalism in the constitution to important global federal systems. Such a relationship will test the hypothesis of what believers in this system say, that the situation of Iraq is similar to those who adopted federalism in the world. The countries whose federal experiences can be studied as models are the United States of America, Switzerland, and Belgium, as each of them indicates a pattern distinct from the other. The world may have witnessed different federal systems throughout the ages, but federalism in the contemporary political sense was born through the experience of the founding of the United States of America in 1783 after several years of confederation between the independent states at the time, but this union faced profound problems due to the independence of each state (state) Until the year 1789, when the American Federal Constitution was drawn up, which granted the regions or states broad powers at the expense of the center. The implemen-

tation of this constitution faced important problems due to the difficulty of continuing as a unified state with this fragmentation of powers and the loss of the center's prestige and its ability to represent and manage the country.

Thus, the Constitution encouraged the emergence of problems and disputes that lasted for nearly seventy years, reaching the point where eleven states tended to secede from the Union. Thus, the American Civil War broke out, which lasted for four years and stopped in 1865 by granting the center or federal authority, represented by Congress and the presidency, greater powers in everything to avoid the causes that It led to that war. Perhaps the important lesson in the experience of American federalism is that the dominance of the authority of the peripheries or regions over the federal authority in the center led the country to a devastating civil war, and that was before the system matured towards supporting the authority of the center in a way that achieved political stability in the United States and perhaps contributed to making the American economy the largest in the world. In Belgium, the experience is different. Federalism there is newly established and began in the nineties of the last century after that country had central rule before that. That is, federalism did not arise between separate countries, but rather between parts of one country separated by linguistic and cultural barriers and historical complexes, and a push towards... The shift towards

federalism in Belgium is the international and European variables that enabled the Dutch-speaking population of the North to demand appropriate political rights after several decades of marginalization resulting from their accusation of collaborating with Nazism during World War II, in favor of the French-speaking population of the South. The Belgian and Swiss experiences provide models for federalisms based on ethnic or sectarian lines. The Belgian experience may provide a precedent for the possibility of transforming a simple central state into a complex federal state, but the Belgian experience was essentially based on the union between two nationalities that had a historical dispute. This is not to mention, of course, that Belgium's economic, social and political conditions and its general European environment helped to establish the new real system with fluidity and popular, without pressure or threats, and also and certainly without direct military occupation. As for the only Arab federal experience, it is represented by the United Arab Emirates, which was established by an agreement between the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in February 1968, and then developed with five other emirates joining the agreement to form the new state.

Will COP28 make any difference.!

By **DR. Mathew JOSE**

It is hoped that COP28 will help maintain the goal of limiting long-term global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This was agreed upon by nearly 200 countries in Paris in 2015, According to the UN climate body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the 1.5°C target is necessary to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change.

The long-term temperature rise is currently about 1.1°C or 1.2°C compared to pre-industrial times, the period before humans began burning fossil fuels on a large scale. However, recent estimates suggest that the world is currently on track to warm by 2.4 to 2.7 degrees Celsius by 2100, although exact numbers are uncertain. As a result, the UN says the window of opportunity to keep the 1.5°C limit within reach is "rapidly narrowing." - Global warming: Earth's temperature may exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius within five years, Global warming: The beginning of the "El Nino" phase of climate change; In addition to progress towards achieving the current Paris goals, COP28 will focus on Accelerating the transition to clean energy sources, in order to "cut" greenhouse gas emissions before 2030.

Getting money for climate action from richer countries to poorer countries, and working towards a new deal for developing countries Focus on nature and people Making Cup 28 the "most comprehensive" ever There will also be days during which issues including health, finance, food and nature will be discussed

More than 200 governments were invited, US President and Chinese President are not expected to attend, but the two countries will be represented, British Prime Minister will participate, and Buckingham Palace has confirmed that King Charles will also attend.



Environmental charities, community conglomerates, think tanks, companies and religious groups are also participating , Hundreds of delegates with links to fossil fuels will attend COP27 in 2022 Climate change: The rate of deforestation is increasing despite political promises and pledges , There will likely be disagreements over the future of fossil fuels, coal, oil and gas, which are burned without technology to capture their emissions. Al Jaber has called for a "gradual reduction" in its use, meaning a reduction over time, but not a complete end. However, the EU is expected to push for a complete "phase-out. Climate activists point out that agreements that reduce fossil fuel consumption allow some production to continue. They argue that there is no guarantee that emissions-capturing technology will work effectively on a large scale. Money will also be an issue At the UN climate change conference COP27, a "loss and damage" fund for richer countries was agreed to pay money to poorer countries facing the effects of climate change, but how exactly will this fund work? It's still not clear. The United States, for example, has ruled out paying climate compensation for its historical emissions. In 2009, developed countries pledged to give \$100 billion annually, by 2020, to developing countries to help them reduce emissions and prepare for climate change, this goal has not been achieved but is expected to be achieved in 2023.

Critics of previous climate conferences, includ-

ing activist Greta Thunberg, accuse the summits of "greenwashing": that is, countries and companies touting their climate credentials without making the necessary changes. But as world leaders come together, summits offer the possibility of reaching global agreements that go beyond national measures. For example, a maximum temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius, agreed in Paris during the COP21 environmental meeting, has prompted "the adoption of near-global climate action," according to the United Nations. World leaders gathered to discuss tackling climate change at a major UN summit in Dubai. This comes after a year of severe weather events in which many climate records were broken. It is the 28th annual United Nations climate meeting, where governments will discuss how to limit climate change and prepare for it in the future. The United Arab Emirates is considered one of the 10 largest oil producing countries in the world It appointed the CEO of the state-owned oil company, Sultan Al Jaber, as head of the COP28 talks Oil - like gas and coal - is a fossil fuel. These are the main causes of climate change because they release greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide when burned for energy Al Jaber Oil Company plans to expand its production capacity, Documents leaked to the BBC indicate that the UAE planned to use its role as host to conclude oil and gas deals. Al Jaber has previously argued that he is uniquely well placed to push for action by the oil and gas industry, and that as head of renewable

energy firm Masdar, he has also overseen the expansion of clean technologies such as wind and solar power. UAE plans to use climate talks to make oil deals. In a surprise that illuminated the COP28 Conference of the Parties on Climate Change held in Dubai, representatives of the countries participating in the conference agreed to implement the creation of a long-awaited fund that would pay the costs of damage caused by storms and drought due to climate change Such deals are usually concluded at the last minute, after days of negotiations, On the first day of the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change, yesterday, the Emirati President of COP28, Sultan Al Jaber, was able to cause a surprise by proposing the decision to implement the establishment of a climate "loss and damage" fund to compensate the countries most affected by climate change Immediately, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and others announced contributions totaling about \$400 million for poor countries suffering the effects of climate change, It is hoped that this agreement will provide sufficient momentum to reach a more comprehensive, ambitious agreement during the summit.

The first day of the 2023 Climate Conference began with stark warnings from the Secretary-General of the United Nations that "we are living through a real climate collapse. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the news that 2023 would "almost certainly" be the hottest year on record should

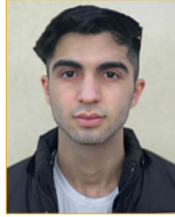
serve as "strong warning messages to world leaders, Three decades after the idea was first proposed, the monetary "loss and damage" agreement was met with sustained applause inside the conference hall The adoption of the resolution was considered a smart move by the United Arab Emirates, which was criticized in the period leading up to the Conference of the Parties, after the BBC published a report, on Monday, stating that leaked briefing documents revealed the UAE's plans to discuss fossil fuel deals with 15 countries

COP28: 2023 will be 'hottest' on record, Are China and India entitled to receive money from the Climate Damage Fund or contribute to its financing, "It is a very smart way for the UAE to open the conference, "They agreed in the first session on one of the most important parts of this entire conference, which is a very contentious part, and although the United States, just a few weeks ago, was not happy with the text related to the Loss and Damage Fund, it agreed to it today . The term "loss and damage" refers to the impacts that many countries suffer from storms, floods, droughts, etc., resulting from climate change. Although funding is available to help countries adapt to rising temperatures and support efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, no money has been provided to help confront the devastation caused by storms and droughts. The idea of providing funds to poor countries affected by climate change was first proposed in the 1990s, but for decades the wealthier countries have been fight-

ing with all their might the idea of establishing such a fund. For fear of having to pay "compensations" for carbon emissions. Last year, it was agreed to establish a "Loss and Damage" Fund during the COP27 conference, which was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt Over the past 12 months, there have been debates between countries about matters such as where the fund should be located and who should pay.

A few weeks before the start of COP28 in Dubai, a preliminary agreement was reached. Usually, any such agreement must be approved by all countries through a plenary session, where negotiators can review and scrutinize the text, which often leads to major debates. After adopting the decision to operate the fund, COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber said: "I congratulate the parties on this historic decision. It sends a positive momentum signal to the world and to our work immediately, the United Arab Emirates and Germany pledged to pump \$100 million into the fund. The United States says it will pay \$17 million, provided it can reach an agreement with Congress. Thus, the United States wants all countries to know that paying the amount is not related to any compensation for thermal emissions. US Special Envoy for Climate John Kerry said: "We have worked very closely, throughout the year, with members of the transition committee to design an effective fund that is based on cooperation and does not involve liability or compensation. The United Kingdom promised to provide 60 million pounds (about 76 million dollars) to the fund. Activists said it was a modest step in the right direction. Chiara Liguori, Senior Climate Justice Policy Advisor at Oxfam, said: "It is encouraging to see the UK Government's commitment to making the Loss and Damage Fund a reality, but this pledge is simply not enough and, importantly, it is not new money.

Primary Health Care and the fundamental changes



By *Dr. Nojdar Akreyi*

Develop and implement e-health services, including ICT infrastructure for health

The important role that primary health care plays in the health of the individual, family and community, when it's done properly, it will be the cornerstones of an increasingly good, healthy life of all the community.

Iraq has a healthy, free and universal healthcare system using a medical, capital-based and hospital-based model of care. Especially large-scale imports of various medicines, and even nurses, paid for by oil exports. In contrast, the Iraq's western system of hospitals that are advanced in advanced medical procedures and provide specialized treatments. Before 1990, 97% of urban residents and 71% of rural residents enjoyed free primary health care, and only 2% of hospitals were privately run.

At this point, in Kurdistan Region, it is necessary to pay attention to the experiences of developed countries and their work in confronting such challenges, as they tended to invent a digital health system that helped get rid of many of the obstacles that prevented the implementation of a comprehensive health care system. In 2005, the World Health Assembly through its resolutions on e-health urged Member States to develop a long-term strategic plan; to develop and implement e-health services, including ICT infrastructure for health, to promote universal, equitable access at a nominal cost to all citizens and groups of society. Member states have created a common vision for e-health, in line with the health priorities and resources available to each country, with Develop an action plan and establish a time frame to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the electronic health system. The number of member states involved in the resolution was (120) countries, including low- and middle-income countries.

We have seen this with tragic consequences during the coronavirus pandemic. Health care was initially the weakest link in

the pandemic in New York, despite its importance in "flattening the curves" of the pandemic through surveillance, testing, and contact tracing, and in preventing hospitals from being overcrowded with critically ill patients.

Although the pandemic is ever-increasing, it has also been marked by the important role played by primary health care during health emergencies. A new World Bank report, "Turning Words into Action: Reimagining Healthcare Post-Coronavirus," reveals how healthcare can be reorganized today, health outcomes improved, and preparedness on the best paths to the next global pandemic. In this report we identify four types of structural transformations that immunology needs to design, finance, and which contain a basic health construct: From quality services to old quality services offering multiple, diverse, diverse and diverse range of services. I care about the part of health care that relates to the patient's needs. Of inequity of justice and accountability, the effective provision of health care contributes to enhancing social security and rewarding damages resulting from health harms. From fragility to resilience, health care teams allocate namely public health surveillance and communication, health sector planning and resource allocation, including increased capacity, both financially and physically.

For this reason, this data is important not only in combating the Corona virus and preventing the next health news, but also in providing safety and healthy relaxation. It provides complete and incomplete health care that is responsive, continuous and community-oriented, and provides an adequate workforce in the health care sector. In order to achieve this, medical education must be reformed and providers must be supported in reskilling multidisciplinary care teams.

We also need to adjust how providers are compensated to encourage them to work as general practitioners rather than as specialist doctors in urban com-

munities and city substitutes. It will also require issuing requirements for healthcare practitioners and technology information. Of vital importance, we must restructure the way primary health care is financed. There is a great need for health financing to provide primary health care for the afflicted, problems that need to be addressed on their own and support from donors. Somehow, it will be important to politically set up all financial reforms and pay for health care with their own revenues rather than with user-paid money, which they cannot afford, and in the process offset the costs of the reforms with heavy taxes on sugar alcohols.

We believe that Iraq is still bearing the losses resulting from these epidemics at all levels. At a rate that may exceed that which occurred in other countries that do not have the financial resources available to Iraq, and with the continued loss of medical competencies; As a result of immigration, and the increase in the gap between supply and demand in the workforce in the health field, which led to increased dependence on foreign labor, or travel outside the country; To receive health services. These factors combined to create lasting change; It reinforces the severity of the major challenges facing the health system in Iraq, in addition to the health problems that have begun to face the medical sector in Iraq, adding to its old health problems - represented by infectious diseases, and the high percentage of people suffering from cancer, immunodeficiency diseases, diabetes, and others - as they have appeared. Other problems include the weak geographical distribution of health services provided to citizens, as well as the high cost of these services, and with the allocation of large budgets and the mobilization of human resources in the health sector during crises, there is still weakness in the provision of comprehensive health care, which is almost non-existent in remote areas.

In 2013, the World Health Assembly unified e-health stan-

dards and applicability, as well as considering developing policies and legislative mechanisms linked to a comprehensive national e-health strategy, based on these decisions, and recognizing the need to strengthen the implementation of digital health mechanisms; The Global Strategy for Digital Health 2020-2025 was then approved, based on the digital revolution that has swept the world in our time, and with governments' interest in digital transformation projects at all levels, and also in implementation of the documents signed with the United Nations - with regard to Iraq - related to achieving development goals. For the year 2030, the need to harness information and communications technology to achieve these goals has emerged, especially those related to health care, as there is a growing consensus in the global health community that the strategic and innovative use of advanced information and communications technology in the health sector; It will be key to ensuring that one billion people benefit from universal health coverage and will enjoy better health care and protection in the future.

The principle of providing comprehensive, free health care financed from general government revenues has been applied in Iraq for many decades. Later, small fees were imposed to be paid by the beneficiary, but the general policy remained unchanged until the 1990s. After the imposition of international economic sanctions on Iraq in 1990, government spending on health services decreased significantly and the self-financing policy was adopted on the basis of a pilot project at first, but it expanded by 1999 to include all hospitals and in 2001 to extend to all primary health care centers as well. Under this policy, hospitals and health centers collected fees from patients in exchange for the treatment and medicines provided to them. The money obtained in this way was used to pay the operating expenses of hospitals and health centers, including salaries and part of the value of

medicines.

This policy was canceled after the 2003 war, and the comprehensive and free health care system was reintroduced. At the same time, the general budget allocations to the health sector increased significantly, rising from \$50 million in 2002 (equivalent to \$2 per capita) to \$1,000 million in 2004 (equivalent to \$39 per capita), representing about 5.1% of the GDP. At present, public health care costs are covered by government revenues, in addition to a small percentage that comes through the collection of fees. There is also a private health sector that is financed through wages paid by the beneficiary, but there is not sufficient information available about the size of this private sector. Despite this significant increase in the health budget, the percentage of health spending per capita in Iraq is still very low compared to the Arab Gulf countries, where the spending rate in some countries is about \$800 per capita, and in European countries, where the spending rate exceeds \$2,000. However, it is worth noting that the ratio of government spending on the health sector compared to the gross domestic product in Iraq is higher than in other neighboring countries.

While the healthcare systems of some countries in the region are struggling, others are well-funded and operate smoothly. Some hospitals in the area have developed into major medical hubs that receive patients from all over the world. The healthcare system of Saudi Arabia provides nationals and expats working in the public sector free public healthcare. The Ministry of Health is the main medical service provider responsible for most hospital facilities in the country. The UAE is recognized worldwide for providing quality medical services in the fields of ophthalmology, dental care, cancer treatment, and cosmetic surgery. It draws medical tourists from the region and beyond. UAE ranked 22nd in the 2020 World Index of Healthcare Innovation.

The Digital Era: Leveraging Innovation and Technology to Transform Iraq's Economy and Society



By **Dr. Mwafaq Ramzi**

Iraq has seen a rise in awareness in recent years of the critical role that innovation and technology play in determining the country's economic environment and social progress. The good transformation of Iraq's economy is still confronted with many obstacles, including those related to infrastructure, human capital, and education; digital inclusion; economic diversification; youth unemployment; historical dependence on oil revenues; regulatory frameworks; infrastructure gaps; geopolitical factors; the emergence of a vibrant startup ecosystem; and the incorporation of digital solutions into public services and governance. This article aims to tackle the current obstacles and investigate potential avenues for employing technology and innovation, adopting state-of-the-art tools, and cultivating a culture of global cooperation, education, and entrepreneurship.

In order to incorporate Iraq into the global innovation and entrepreneurship map and effectively employ technology and innovation, it is imperative to tackle the following current obstacles: A) Infrastructure Issues: Inadequate internet access and unstable electrical supplies hinder the widespread use of digital technology. For instance, a lack of high-speed internet connectivity in rural areas may limit people's and enterprises' capacity to fully engage in the digital economy. Frequent power outages can have a negative impact on productivity and creativity in data centers and other technology-intensive businesses. B) Transportation Infrastructure: Inefficient transportation infrastructure has an impact on the logistics of technological items. For instance, insufficient transportation infrastructure and road networks might cause delays in the supply of technical goods and services. C) Regulatory Frameworks: Outdated or ambiguous regulations could impede the development of startup ecosystems and technologies. For instance, the absence of precise regulations for developing tech-

nology may deter investors and business owners from taking on creative projects. Stable business environments, intellectual property protection, and investor attraction all depend on clear and encouraging legal frameworks. D) Geopolitical factors: Historical international sanctions as well as ongoing security concerns have an impact on the stability and expansion of the technology sector. Developments in the world economy and disruptions in the global technology supply chain also have an impact on Iraq's technological revolution. For instance, areas with security issues would find it difficult to draw in outside capital, which would impede the growth of technology-driven enterprises. Sanction-related restrictions on specific technologies may make it more difficult for Iraq to work with international partners and adopt state-of-the-art solutions. Economic downturns or disruptions in the global technology supply chain may have an impact on the availability of resources and investments in Iraq's technology sector. E) Human Capital and Education: Issues with the educational system and a skills gap in the workforce may slow down the adoption of innovative technologies. For instance, the adoption of cutting-edge solutions may be hampered if new technologies arise faster than there are qualified experts to handle them. Students may not receive the necessary training in the educational system to fill positions in rapidly growing technology sectors. To solve these problems and guarantee a workforce that is tech-savvy and well-equipped, strategic measures are required. F) Digital Inclusion: A digital divide is brought about by differences in digital infrastructure and literacy between urban and rural areas, as well as financial concerns. For instance, people living in rural locations may not have as easy access to technology resources and high-speed internet as people living in urban areas. Exorbitant expenses could impede

lower-class people's and communities' access to technology, hence intensifying social and economic disparities. For all facets of society to reap the rewards of the technological revolution, this divide must be closed. G) Data Security and Privacy: Insufficient laws protect data security and privacy. For instance, people and companies would be reluctant to adopt digital platforms in the absence of strong data privacy rules, which would restrict the expansion of e-commerce and online services. H) Funding Access: Funding and investment-related regulatory constraints. Strict laws could make it more difficult for venture capital firms to establish themselves or for entrepreneurs to obtain the cash they need for expansion and development.

A targeted strategy incorporating regional governance, private sector engagement, and community activities to build an environment conducive to technology growth and innovation is necessary to explore some prospects for resolving the difficulties mentioned above in Iraq. Among the opportunities are the following ones: A) Economic Diversification: Iraq's economy, which has historically relied heavily on oil, may be made more diverse by utilizing technology and innovation. Iraq wants to lessen its dependency on oil income by supporting industries including manufacturing, information technology, and renewable energy. To conduct transactions, pay bills, and access financial services, for instance, consumers can integrate digital payment methods like mobile wallets and digital payment solutions without requiring traditional banking infrastructure. B) Job Creation and Economic Development: Innovation and technology-focused initiatives can spark the growth of new businesses and employment sectors. This is especially significant since it gives young people in Iraq jobs in developing industries. For instance, farmers may maximize crop yields, effectively manage water resources, and make



data-driven decisions for sustainable agriculture with the aid of precision farming techniques, remote sensing, and data analytics. C) Productivity and Efficiency: Using cutting-edge technologies can boost productivity and efficiency across a range of industries, which will support general economic expansion. This is pertinent to industries including manufacturing, services, and agriculture. For instance, the goal of streamlining public services through the use of e-government services is to give Iraqi residents online access to a range of government services. This program lowers bureaucratic barriers and improves administrative efficiency. D) Information Technology (IT): Investments to build Iraq's IT infrastructure, boosting digital connections and growing broadband networks, among other things. This makes it possible to manage data, access information, and communicate better. For instance, access to healthcare services will be made possible by the use of telemedicine platforms, particularly in rural locations. Virtual consultations between patients and medical specialists increase healthcare accessibility and lessen the strain on conventional healthcare institutions. E) Startups and Entrepreneurship: Promoting innovation requires initiatives that assist startups and entrepreneurship. The establishment of incubators, accelerators, and funding programs supports new company endeavors. Investing in renewable energy projects will help the nation achieve its objective of capturing solar energy, for instance, by diversifying its energy sources. These

kinds of projects support sustainable development in addition to meeting energy needs. F) Digital Transformation: To modernize public services, expedite administrative procedures, and enhance citizen engagement, the public and private sectors are progressively implementing digital transformation initiatives. This entails combining data-driven decision-making with digital technologies. For instance, the use of online learning environments will increase. By providing online courses and learning materials, these platforms provide access to high-quality education and upskill the labor force. G) E-Government Services: One of the most important aspects of digital transformation is the implementation of e-government services. This covers digital identity systems, public service internet platforms, and electronic citizen-government interactions. H) Cybersecurity Measures: To safeguard sensitive data, vital infrastructure, and online transactions, cybersecurity measures are becoming more and more important as our reliance on digital technologies increases. Developing a strong cybersecurity framework is critical to the long-term success of technological projects. For instance, cybersecurity becomes more important as services become more digitalized. It is necessary to work on bolstering the nation's cybersecurity defenses, thwarting cyberattacks, and guaranteeing the safe functioning of digital networks. I) Collaboration with the Global Tech Community: Making a concerted effort to build partnerships, work with the global tech commu-

nity, and draw in foreign capital for its technology industry. Collaborations with foreign tech companies, such as agreements with global cloud service providers, are one way to improve Iraq's technology capabilities. These partnerships benefit the nation by bringing cutting-edge technology, knowledge, and investments. J) Education and Skill Development: A skilled workforce is necessary for innovation and technology. Putting money into education and skill-building initiatives guarantees that the labor force has the know-how to propel technological progress and assist developing sectors. K) Sustainable Development: Through the promotion of clean energy, effective resource management, and ecologically friendly practices, technology may support sustainable development. Innovations in sustainable agriculture and renewable energy, for instance, can benefit the environment and the economy. It's crucial to remember that, even though the aforementioned opportunities highlight the benefits of employing innovation and technology, obstacles like inadequate infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and geopolitical considerations still need to be resolved in order to bring about a long-lasting and significant change in Iraq's economy and society. In order to overcome these obstacles and fully realize the promise of exploiting advancements in technology and innovation, ongoing efforts will be essential, both domestically and through international collaborations and partnerships.

Prominent 'Raman' Magazine Holds Annual Festival in Erbil



Under the slogan (Kurds and the cultural policy), the prominent Raman magazine held its first annual festival in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan Region on 29-30 November 2023. The festival was attended by intellectuals, authors, poets, and artists from different parts of Kurdistan. Range of different topics in regard to cultural policy was pre-

sented in the panels of the festival which lasted for two days. The festival shed light on the role and impact of the magazine on Kurdish culture, arts, literature, and language. In addition, it reaffirmed commitment of the magazine to continue highlighting the translation of the Kurdish texts, in all genres, into other living

languages. In addition to that, utilizing a special institution was urged for the purpose of familiarization, regionalization and globalization of the Kurdish art and literature texts. The festival concluded its events with setting forth several recommendations with regard to the Kurdish culture and arts. - Incorporating

the philosophical and intellectual matters into the school curriculum to promote critical thinking to reading and self-analysis. - Conducting further research in other languages on Kurdish language, literature, and culture at certain university departments. - Promoting Kurdish language in the

education medium, public and commercial places, and use of Kurdish language in the public as the primary language. - Promoting the spirit of coexistence and harmony of the different opinions for the purpose of achieving social security, making use of the proud history of coexistence among the ethnic and religious compo-

nents in Kurdistan Region Raman magazine was first issued in 1996, focusing on the Kurdish language, art, culture and literature. The magazine has been playing a significant role in gathering the voices of Kurdish authors from different parts of Kurdistan in the last 27 years.

Kurdish footballer wants to play for Germany

Deniz Undav is a Kurdish football striker who is originally from Ruha in North Kurdistan and plays for Stuttgart club in German Bundesliga, has refused to play for Turkey and wants to play for Germany instead.

"Deniz Undav has rejected the Turkish national team because of his Kurdish origin and he continues to attract attention football lovers in Stuttgart," Photospor reported.

Turkey's national team football manager, Vincenzo Montella, has been watching Undav and he wants to call him to Euro 2024, but the player has refused to play for the country.

According to reports, Germany coach Julian Nigelsmann is monitoring the Kurdish striker's abilities to invite him to the squad, especially as Germany have problems in terms of attack and want to do their best for Euro.

If the Kurdish striker continues to score with



Stuttgart, he could be called up to Germany in March for two warm-up games in preparation for Euro.

Nigelsmann has already contacted Deniz

Undav and the coach is impressed with the player's abilities and could eventually call him up.

"It means a lot to me. It's the only thing I've

ever seen in my career. What's better than playing for your country? I'm proud of that," Undav said.

Deniz Undav, 27, from Ruha, North

Kurdistan, plays for Brighton but is on loan at Stuttgart.

The Stuttgart striker, who has not played for any national team so far, could choose

between Turkey and Germany. He has been under scrutiny this season, having made 10 appearances and scored eight goals in the Bundesliga.

Tutumlu wins third place for Kurdistan Racing Team

The Spanish-Kurdish race car driver Isaac Tutumlu collected a trophy for the Kurdistan Racing Team



The Kurdistan Racing Team had a remarkable season, with the Spanish-Kurdish race car driver Isaac Tutumlu leading the way.

Tutumlu expressed his gratitude for the team's strong performance and impressive racing results. Their hard work paid off as they secured the third position overall in the GT World Championship in the ProAm class.

This achievement holds great significance considering the challenges they faced in competing at a world championship level and consistently ranking in the top five.

Tutumlu highlighted the team's victory in Barcelona as a crucial factor in securing their third position in the championship. He emphasized that their

success not only brings pride to the team but also to Kurdistan, motivating them to continue pushing forward.

Looking ahead to the next season, the team is actively seeking support from different companies to maintain and possibly increase their level of support.

With this backing, they are optimistic about their prospects for the upcoming year and remain highly motivated to fight for their country, Kurdistan.

In addition to their overall success, the team also celebrated a notable victory in October, finishing first in the 2023 GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup in the Pro-Am Class.



Transforming Approaches in an Evolving Region



By **Jawad Qadir** *

The US foreign policy in the Middle East has undergone a significant shift, with a renewed focus on countering China's influence along the Silk Road. The US recognizes the growing influence of China in the region and is actively considering strategies to mitigate its impact. One approach being considered is the establishment of positive relationships with key regional countries including Turkey and even Iran, in order to deter China's expanding presence.

The US government acknowledges the complexities of the Middle East and understands that addressing China's challenges is just one aspect of its foreign policy objectives in the region. Tackling climate change and strengthening US-Europe relations are also key priorities. Additionally, the impact of the Corona pandemic on the US economy has further underscored the need to address China's rise as it continues on its trajectory to become the world's largest economy. China has actively cultivated relationships with countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and of course Iran, offering an alternative political model that does not impose political demands including human rights and democratic reforms. This has created opportunities for countries like Egypt and Turkey, who find dealing with China advantageous.

Furthermore, Russia has been energetically strengthening its influence in the Middle East through alliances with the regional powers. This alignment of interests between China and regional powers reflects their shared objective of establishing dominance

in the region and diminishing Western influence.

In response to these developments, the US is taking a comprehensive approach to its foreign policy in the region. By recognizing the challenges posed by China's growing influence, engaging with key countries, and understanding the complexities of the region, the US aims to effectively address these dynamics and safeguard its interests in the Middle East.

The West has expressed its opposition to Turkey's military attacks into Syria and instead advocates for engaging with Middle Eastern countries through diplomatic means. This approach emphasizes the importance of building alliances and partnerships, rather than relying solely on military strength.

At present, Iraq is perceived by the United States as being significantly influenced by its neighboring Iran, primarily due to the substantial influx of goods valued at \$10 billion from Iran. Consequently, this has resulted in a sense of discontentment and a range of actions from the US, such as reducing the number of military bases in Iraq and simultaneously targeting militia bases within the country. Furthermore, the foreign policy of the US entails bolstering Turkey's sway in the Middle East. The US has now shifted its focus away from the Middle East, preferring a more indirect involvement and seeking active participation from allies such as the UAE, Turkey, and Israel signifies a change in the US military presence in the Middle East.

Kurdistan Matters:

Fortnightly Reflections on Kurdish Politics and Society

Kurdistan, especially the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, remains a largely overlooked keystone of the Middle East. It holds tremendous promise as land of true pluralism and abundant resources. Its institutions are at once ancient and ambitious. Over the past decade, I have had the privilege of getting to know the peoples of Kurdistan. A respectful outsider and grateful visitor, I have been the recipient of Kurdish hospitality in all sense of the word. Now I have the privilege of contributing a fortnightly essay for the pages of the Kurdish Globe. Under the title, "Kurdistan Matters," these essays will offer critical reflections and in-depth conversations about the politics, societies, and cultures of Kurdistan. The matters of Kurdistan truly do matter. They matter for the peoples that call Kurdistan home, for the Kurdish diaspora, and for geopolitics more broadly.

Dr. Tyler Fisher



The KRG seeks to attract tourists for winter season



The Tourism Board of the Kurdistan Region plans to increase the number of tourists during the snow season by offering different activities in areas where there is heavy snowfall, a board official said.

Ibrahim Abdulmajid, Head of Communications department at the Tourism Board, stated that there is ongoing planning and efforts to develop tourism sector in the Kurdistan Region as the Region has passed the tourism season, adding that in the past years, tourists were only visiting Kurdistan during summer or special occasions, but a lot of tourists have visited popular destinations and resorts during autumn and winter.

The Tourism Board is preparing to hold several festivals and tourism activities during the upcoming winter season.

"A lot of tourists are interested in visiting the areas that experience heavy snowfall, hence the

Board is planning to prepare a number of snow activities on Hassan Beg and Korek Mountain in Soran district of Erbil province and mountain areas of Penjwin in Sulaimani," the tourism official told the press.

People from south and central provinces of Iraq account for the largest number of tourists visiting the Kurdistan Region for tourism purposes, while the remaining tourists come from outside of Kurdistan.

According to the KRG statistics, by the end of June 2023, about 5 million summer tourists, 25% of whom were foreigners, visited Kurdistan's tourist spots. The government's plan is to further boost tourism, aiming for 20 million tourists by 2030.

Abdulmajid mentioned that these efforts are projected to bring the total tourist count to 8 million in 2023, with expectations of even higher numbers in subsequent years.